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Love at the Holy Well

London Published 1845, by Longman, Brown & Co

ANNA ELIZA BRAY.

London: Published 1845 by Longman & Co.

ANNA ELIZA BRAY

London: Published 1842 by Longman [illegible] & Co.

WARLEIGH;

OR,

THE FATAL OAK.

A Legend of Devon.

BY

MRS. BRAY.

Many a tale
Traditionary round the mountains hung,
And many a legend peopling the dark woods
Nourish'd Imagination in her growth."
Excursion, Book I.

A NEW EDITION,
REVISED AND CORRECTED, WITH NOTES BY THE AUTHOR.

LONDON:
LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, AND LONGMANS,
PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1845.

249. z. 146.

LONDON:
Printed by Manning and Mason, Ivy Lane, St. Paul's.

TO

MRS. SOUTHEY.

My dear Mrs. Southey,

The original Edition of Warleigh was dedicated to your most beloved and lamented husband. Mr. Southey has himself said, when addressing a friend (Sir Robert Harry Inglis), that "if there is anything on which we may be allowed to pride ourselves, it is upon that from whence one of our greatest pleasures is derived—the friendship of the wise and the good."* How great then must be my satisfaction, and how pardonable, I trust, this allusion to it, when I recollect that I was honoured with the friendship and correspondence of the late Poet Laureate; whose genius I admired, whose virtues I revered, and whose kindness I so largely experienced during a period of so many years.

I venture, therefore, to hope that these considerations will induce you to accept the dedication of the present Edition of the same work. To whom could I so appropriately inscribe it as to yourself, who, kindred to your lamented husband in spirit and in feeling, have continued towards myself a friendship, similar in kindness and sincerity to his which I so highly prized, and of whose value I am no less sensible. With this assurance,

Allow me to remain,

My dear Mrs. Southey,

Your faithful and attached Friend,

ANNA ELIZA BRAY.

The Vicarage, Tavistock,
September 24th, 1845.

* In the Dedication of the "Moral and Political Essays."

WARLEIGH.

INTRODUCTION.

I love, thus uncontroll'd, as in a dream,
To muse upon the course of human things;
Exploring sometimes the remotest springs,
Far as tradition lends one guiding gleam.
SOUTHEY'S *Tale of Paraguay.*

THERE is no county, perhaps, in England that abounds more in the traditions of old times and families than that of Devon. These, however, are fast falling into oblivion. The rising generation, who, commonly speaking, are eager to follow in the march of intellect, smile at the legends of their grandmothers; and the elders themselves, who are mostly the living depositories of this kind of lore, gradually sink into their graves; and, with them, too often dies a fund of information which has no written record. Many of the traditions to which I have alluded (no doubt, like all other tales) lose nothing of their wonders by transmission from generation to generation. Nevertheless, there is that of simplicity and nature about them, which may be considered a strong presumptive evidence that they are founded in truth: in some instances, also, they are confirmed by points of known history, with which they are, more or less, connected. For my own part, I confess that I have ever felt a great delight in collecting the fragments of such old stories as are nearly forgotten, or in danger of becoming extinct; and whilst listening to a tale of other times, I have not been so over critical as to object to every thing that is told unless I could find confirmation of its truth (to adopt a vulgar but expressive phrase) in black and white. It may be a deception, it may be credulity to listen to it; still the illusion is harmless: nor can it fail to be replete with lively associations, that engage the imagination, and call up many a reflecting mood on times and things long past away.

Living, as I do, in the midst of a most delightful part of Devon, how much interest is conveyed to an ancient dwelling, a particular rock, or a lone valley, with its bubbling stream

and its beautiful hanging woods, by being able to say, "This is the scene," or "this is the spot," where such and such events are said to have occurred! Who, for instance, even though he be a stranger, can look upon the narrow rocky cavern, so long said to have sheltered the persecuted royalist, Elford, without dwelling with interest on the recollection of those times when so many worthies of this county, gallantly suffered, bled, and died, in the cause of loyalty and religion? This latter observation, indeed, is not altogether inapplicable to the present subject; as the story connected with that cavern, now considered by the peasantry as a pixie haunt, first excited my imagination, and induced me to collect such particulars as might still be gleaned from oral tradition respecting the remarkable local events of the neighbourhood in which I live.

This soon became with me a favourite pursuit; and though I was not always successful in gaining as much intelligence as I desired, yet the many beautiful scenes, curious old houses, and antiquities, which I visited during these researches, were exceedingly interesting; and in addition to the opportunities I thus gained of acquiring a knowledge of past times, I had the gratification of experiencing the kindness and goodwill of many a family, who obligingly afforded me all the information they were able to communicate, and sometimes, when they had nothing to tell, their old family pictures, their ancient mansion, and even their furniture, supplied a fund for observation. Indeed, I received so many kindnesses of this nature, that I should feel a grateful pleasure in here naming all the benefactors to my researches, did I not fear lest, in doing so, I might be charged with being too particular on a subject that cannot interest others so much as it does myself.

However, I cannot wholly refrain from expressing my thanks to the Earl of Mount Edgcumbe, for the liberal manner in which his Lordship afforded me every facility in his power to assist my pursuits at Mount Edgcumbe:* One family in particular must also be named, since Warleigh is now theirs; and I trust that some slight relation of my visit to that ancient baronial residence will not here be found misplaced; for the following work owes its existence to a circumstance of that visit, which will speedily be told.

It was a beautiful day, towards the close of the summer of

* The Earl of Mount Edgcumbe has not only enlarged and decorated the ancient family seat in a style of the utmost magnificence, but has placed within it a rare and beautiful collection of paintings. His Lordship has also added some costly gardens, in the style of different nations. These are all worthy of admiration; but the lover of nature, in her wildest forms, will feel his obligation to the good taste of the present proprietor, who so carefully preserves the venerable and majestic trees of the domain.

1830, that, in company with a small party of friends, I set off in a boat from Devonport, to visit the mansion, as well as the family, at Warleigh. I shall not here detain my reader by describing to him very minutely our ever-varying progress, as we passed up the Hamoaze, formed by the united waters of many rivers, that expansive estuary which unites itself with the Sound; nor shall I detail to him the number of men-of-war that, in this "piping time of peace," are constantly kept floating on its surface, where a thousand little boats, all day in motion, add to the life and animation of the scene. I shall only tell him, that if he be an antiquary, and should ever make the same excursion, he will look with an eye of interest on Saltash—though it is not at all a beautiful place—as he sees it lying on the slope of a steep hill; for Saltash will afford him a theme for debate, whether it was, or was not, the Tamare of Antonius. The learned differ in opinion; some fixing it at the town just named, and others declaring Tamerton (so very germane in sound) to have been the site of that ancient Roman station.

On passing Saltash, a most lovely scene presents itself; for the river becomes so broad that it looks not unlike a lake; villages, each with the tower of its ancient church, arise in succession amid thick woods or verdant slopes; and the mouths of the many rivers present to the eye a vast variety of objects replete with interest. And scarcely had we ceased to admire these than we came in sight of the oak-crowned point of Warleigh, that boldly projects itself at the entrance of the Tavy. Immediately beyond it arose gently-swelling hills, beautifully wooded, and now seen rich in their liveries of green and russet. On one of these was Maristow, the seat of Sir M. Lopez; whilst Dartmoor, which ever affords the finest backgrounds in Devonshire scenery, stood towering in the distance, shewing its heights, composed of granite tors, glittering in the sun. The varying effects of light and shade upon these eminences were exceedingly striking. The glow of the horizon was of a dazzling brightness;. but a mass of dark clouds, that sailed slowly onward, soon cast their shadows upon the lower declivities, and shewed distinctly the bold and picturesque outlines of the extensive moor.

There was a charm also in the calmness of the day, and in the deep repose of the scene: for the waters—bound up, as it were, in slumber—lay spread around like a clear mirror, in whose silvery surface, distinctly reflected, appeared the clouds and the feathering woods, as they hung gracefully bending over the shelving shores. There was something, too, of interest in watching the silent and gentle motion with which we now

glided down Tamerton Creek, towards the town of that name; for a visit to the church had been determined upon before we proceeded to Warleigh House. The creek is skirted by the woods, and a fine bold rock, of a considerable elevation, that bears the name of Warleigh Tor, gives a character of grandeur even to this small inlet of the majestic Tavy.

The little village of Tamerton, sequestered and picturesque, presents many such combinations as a Prout would treat with a skill in which few have yet been his rivals. Tamerton might almost be called "the meeting of the valleys," for three of them there unite together; and, in the midst, on a gentle swell of a hill, stands the beautiful weather-beaten old church, that has beheld many a century bring beneath its venerable roof the generations of the village in succession, at their baptisms, weddings, and funerals, and with the self-same bells has rung out a peal for their bridals, or a solemn knell at their departure.

We ascended a flight of steps, hewn out of the living rock, which led from the village to the church, where, on entering, we listened to the good old sexton, who told us many a tale about the parish; and who, having got hold of what he fancied to be a finer word than is usually found to mingle itself in village colloquies, repeated it to us about fifty times over, as he sat, leaning on his staff, on the pulpit stairs. "The *poplation* of Tamerton was," he said, "very much increased; for, when he was a boy, he remembered no *poplation* at all in comparison to it; but all *poplations* were so, since Bonaparte and the wars had been put down by the Duke of Wellington."

Our conductor pointed out to us one or two monuments that he deemed of importance. We looked also at the ancient tombs of the Foliots and the Copplestones, and the white-washed effigies of Roger de Gorges and his lady; which the good sexton assured us a young gentleman, who made drawings and maps of old figures, had come all the way from London for the purpose of cleaning: and surely, if such were the case, it was an act much wanted; and for which the noble knight, who never contemplated such a surcoat of whitewash for his monumental armour, would, doubtless, have been thankful. We quitted the old church, and its sombre cemetery, surrounded by tall and shadowy trees, in a mood accordant with serious thoughts and feelings, in order to look upon what is called "the Copplestone Oak," after having just looked upon the "Copplestone Tomb," and listened to the legend respecting its long-remembered tenant; when—how shall I speak our surprise at a scene, so much in contrast, that now burst upon our sight?—on the village green, close without

the churchyard, and full in view of this celebrated tree, a group, the gayest and the most attractive, surprised us into a feeling of cheerfulness and pleasure, almost before we were conscious of the change.

The village green was tastefully festooned and garlanded with flowers, laurels, and myrtle. Tables of the choicest fruits were spread in gay and inviting luxuriance; whilst, on "the smooth shaven turf" appeared, with all the joyous and mirthful character of a village fair, not merely the "neat-handed" Phillises of the cottage or the farm, but a "bevy of ladies," distinguished by elegance and rank; and, to their praise be it spoken, by benevolence also. It was in fact, on this day and at this place, that the Tamerton festival was held, for the benefit of the village school. Youth, beauty, and elegance are at all times attractive; but, when thus seen grouped amidst trees and flowers, glittering in the sun, and canopied by the blue arch of a summer sky, the effect produced by such objects became so heightened, so engaging, that not even the gloom of the dark yews, nor the sombre tints of the old church tower, which stood, like a monitor to mirth and beauty, in the background, could create other than delighted feelings.

It was here that the amiable and accomplished conductress of the festival, the mistress of Warleigh, received us: and, after having paid our respects to one so justly entitled to the universal regard in which she is held; having gazed on the Copplestone Oak, and heard the often told tale once more repeated, we set off in company with Mr. R——, the worthy proprietor of Warleigh, to visit that ancient mansion. We were much gratified by the kind attention of our guide. Mr. R—— is of a character, now, alas! getting too much out of fashion. He retains the plain, open sincerity of old English manners; looks as if he meant what he says, and says nothing but what he feels; pays no compliment, but that which is the most honest of all compliments, and shews good nature as well as good manners,—a ready attention to oblige, or to do any act of kindness that may be acceptable to the feelings of another; and who is both old-fashioned and warm-hearted enough to give a friend a hearty shake by the hand, and to drink a health to him at table.

Mr. R—— conducted us through a considerable part of his domain, and took us to the summit of a hill which commands an extensive prospect of the surrounding country. The rivers Tavy and Tamar, the Lake, Saltash, the Hamoaze, with the high lands of Cornwall and Devon, clothed with wood and verdure, and finely contrasted by the rugged and sterile character of Dartmoor, the pretty village of Tamerton, the church,

with the farms and cottages around, all combined to produce one of those successions of interesting objects so well suited to panoramic painting.

We continued our way across some fields, where, on gaining a particular spot on the side of a hill, not far distant from the river, the fine baronial residence of Warleigh, its avenues of noble trees, gardens, and plantations; the whole backed by the clear blue waters of the Tavy, at once burst upon our sight; and as we descended towards the house, every step presented a new combination of scenic and beautiful effects.

We proceeded on to Warleigh; but, as in the following pages I shall have occasion to speak more at large respecting this venerable mansion, I shall here only observe that we found it a substantial and noble piece of architecture; originally built in the reign of king Stephen, but altered and enlarged in the times of Henry the Seventh and Henry the Eighth, and having very recently received the addition of a rich doorway, quite in character with the original building.

After shewing us the hall, and the greater part of the interior, Mr. R—— led the way to a small apartment adjoining the hall, and looking towards the gardens in front of the house. Here were many books; in fact, it was the library. The volumes it contained, Mr. R—— told us, had been chiefly collected by an uncle of his, since dead, who was partial to literature; and being also somewhat of an antiquary, had been a careful preserver of all the old family deeds, leases, letters, records, etc., etc. The books spoke at once the character of their late proprietor; they were full of marginal notes, in his own handwriting. Mr. R——, anxious to afford us all the information we could desire respecting the former inhabitants of Warleigh, produced a bundle of old brown dusty parchments, containing records as far back as the reign of King Stephen. Most of them were in Latin, and in a character cramped, worn, and almost illegible in many places. These were far beyond my antiquarian skill to decipher; and, like one who travels in a country with the language of which he is unacquainted, I could only admire, without understanding, the very things that lay before my sight. On some of the parchments there were curious seals, in a high state of preservation. Here and there I could make out a word or a line that rather piqued than gratified curiosity, till I was, at length, obliged to give up the investigation, and could only regret how much information I must lose by not being able to read old writings and monkish Latin.

However, though I failed here, I was successful in reading the plain fair hand of the deceased antiquary; and, on care-

lessly looking over a bundle of papers—having permission to open any I pleased—my attention was at once arrested by seeing a very small packet, carefully tied up with pink tape. It would be needless, perhaps, to tell the reader, that this was a packet of exciting interest. I was allowed to gratify my curiosity; and though I confess the information it contained might be less full than could have been desired, still was it sufficient to excite and stimulate imagination. The following pages owe their existence to the few, but remarkable, facts connected with the tradition of the Copplestone Oak, which thus became known to me: and as, in all works of fiction, nothing adds so much to their interest as a knowledge of their being founded on truth, I thought it better to relate the above particulars for the satisfaction of my readers. Man seems born with an innate love of truth; it is natural to him: for, if you relate a tale but to a child, the first remark that passes his lips, as he stands looking with wonder in your face, will be—"Is it all true?"

I have but one more observation to make respecting the traditionary lore on which some parts of the following narrative are founded; and that is, to tell the reader that I am aware one circumstance of the tale borders on the marvellous: nor do I pretend to argue the point of its truth with any critic who may feel disposed to be sceptical on the subject. Be it false or true, it was an oral tradition, and as such, was sufficient for my purpose, especially as it will be found connected with the spirit of former times.

The following narrative, however, I ought to remark, is but little concerned with events of a public nature; not more so than must ever be the case in the history of every family, who may have the misfortune to live in troublesome times, and to learn the truth of an observation which avers—that private happiness cannot hope for security during public dissensions and calamity.

A. E. B.

Vicarage, Tavistock, Nov. 1, 1830.

CHAPTER I.

'Tis pleasant, by the cheerful hearth, to hear
Of tempests, and the dangers of the deep,
And pause at times, and feel that we are safe:
Then listen to the perilous tale again,
And with an eager and suspended soul
Woo terror to delight us.

SOUTHEY'S "MADOC."

THE Eddystone Light-house has long been celebrated, not only as the most remarkable structure of the kind in this kingdom, but, perhaps, in the whole world. The dangerous reef of rocks on which it stands, surrounded, and in a storm, covered, by roaring breakers, is supposed to derive its name from the number of contrary eddies that here meet and strive amidst their deep and dark abysses. These rocks are distant at least twelve miles from the coast of Devon, entirely insulated, and lie directly in the way of such vessels as may chance to coast the Channel.

To have approached them at any time, unless under the guidance of an experienced pilot, must have been hazardous; but during a dark night, or in a gale of wind, no other than certain destruction; nay, seldom in former times could any vessel, during a storm, escape the fatal reef, did she attempt to reach Plymouth harbour amid the hours of darkness. Dangerous, toilsome, and almost impracticable as it seemed, yet the genius of man triumphed over the difficulties presented by the Eddystone; for in the year 1696, Winstanley, the Merlin of his age, erected upon it a light-house, which, having withstood several tremendous assaults from the tempestuous ocean—that once, it is said, hurled its waves more than a hundred feet above the fabric, cresting with foam its burning top—the founder deemed was as capable of endurance as the rocks on which it stood. With too much presumption, perhaps, on his own skill, and too little thought of God's power to overthrow the strongest works of man at his pleasure, he even expressed a wish, that the first time he visited the light-house, the greatest storm might blow that ever shook the heavens. The wish, rashly formed, was too soon, and too fatally gratified; for the floods arose, and "the Most High uttered his voice, and the channels of the sea appeared," and the strong walls and their unfortunate founder

were swept away together; so that, when the sun arose, nothing was to be seen but a few black specks amid the breakers; even the rocks which remained firm, and unshaken, and, alas! as destructive as ever. The light-house which now stands on the reef, was erected by Smeaton, on a better planned foundation, at a subsequent period: and in here adverting either to the one or the other building, we certainly have been guilty of digressing, since what we have to detail, respecting the dangers of the Eddystone rocks, refers to a period before Winstanley achieved his bold and surprising work,—when not a year passed without fearful and multiplied losses of ships, cargoes, and human lives, on the most fatal reef that skirted the western coast.

It was during the vernal equinox of the year 1647, that two English merchant vessels, the one called the Virginia, and the other the Old James, heavily laden, and homeward bound from the Western Indies, were making their way through a stormy sea in a very distressed condition. The Virginia, however, was, to use a nautical phrase, more "seaworthy" than her companion; and it is with the fortunes of the Old James that we are here principally concerned. The latter ship had already suffered by a tempest, and it seemed but too probable that she was destined still to suffer more (perhaps complete wreck) near that very coast to which she had looked with an eye of longing and of hope.

The particulars that, at this distant period, have reached us respecting the distresses of the Old James are but few, yet sufficiently fearful; and, according to the credulity of the times, have not been forgotten the various signs and bad omens (some of them being nothing more than natural phenomena observed at sea) which were considered as indicative of what was to happen. First, then, the vessel had set sail on a Friday, and without taking the precaution of nailing a horseshoe on the foremast, to keep off the witches, who soon profited by the omission; and giving their imps and familiars possession of the masts and rigging, they speedily capered about, and played up what was called "a devil's mass" on board the ship. For several nights together strange and sweet sounds were heard about the sides of the vessel; yet no mermaid, no sea minstrel appeared seated on a dolphin's back, chanting her wild melodies as she combed down her long locks of silken hair. But though the musicians were invisible, there was seen an unknown aquatic bird, that settled on the mast head, or hovered round the ship during many days: the seamen attempted, by more than once firing at it, to get rid of so singular a visitant; but the bird, as if proof against

danger, seemed neither hurt nor dismayed by these hostile attempts upon her life. There was also seen playing about the vessel a light, like that of a small star, which would appear and tremble, and anon disappear, and then would come again and stream with a brilliant flame along the mast, shooting from "shroud to shroud," darting, flaring, or blazing like Ariel in the Tempest, and, like that "dainty spirit," might be said sometimes

> To flame amazement; sometimes to divide,
> And burn in many places.

Setting aside the credulity of the age, we presume these lights to have been nothing more than a "sea fire," not unfrequently witnessed before, as well as during, a violent storm; certainly ominous of anything but calm seas and hopeful weather. In the present instance, these prognostics had been followed by a formidable tempest, that had dreadfully distressed the ship. For many days she had laboured in a hollow sea, partly dismasted; and, at the time she neared land, remained little better than a hulk, at the mercy of those winds and waves that seldom exert their full powers in angry conjunction but for destruction. During the last twenty-four hours, the storm had been so violent, that it seemed to the minds of the unfortunate crew as if it could scarcely be worse; yet worse it was, and that speedily: for the tempest, which hitherto had made itself felt by sudden bursts and squalls, now became more constant in its terrors, as the winds rose higher and higher in their fury. Though it was noonday, yet was there darkness; a "thick darkness," like that of Egypt, which could be felt as well as seen.

In the extreme distance, a red streaky line of light, as of blood, gave a distinguishing character of horror to the horizon. The clouds, vast, black, and spreading, seemed in that state of agitation which made them resemble the stormy sea, over which they cast their awful shadows; as a worker of wicked spells and foul enchantments is said to cast the shadow of his body over the creature whom he destines to perform his destructive will. Onward they came, rolling from the west, in volumes of darkness, yet surcharged with the electric elements of light. At one moment they were black as midnight, at the next a sheet of fire, as the redoubling thunder burst at intervals in fearful combination with the roar of ocean and of the wind that, loud, steady, and appalling, howled along the deep. The sea seemed to rise and dash its waves against the sky, whilst the rain poured down in such a flood, as if "the windows of heaven were opened, and the fountains of the great deep were broken up." By the sudden gleams of

lightning, shot from east to west, the boiling surges might be seen afar off in the distance, so that there was no circumstance of the tempest but what disclosed a scene of terror even to the brave. Sometimes the vivid flashes were followed by utter darkness, when the ear alone conveyed to the mind those awful impressions, to which the eye, but a moment before, had also borne fearful witness.

The ship was now in a most perilous state; but one mast left, and that in such a condition that if the seamen attempted but to hoist a hollock to guide her before the seas, "truly it required," to use the phrase of the time, "ten men to hold the whipstaffe in order to keep it right; so terrible was the power of those angry waters." Labouring and rolling gunwale-to, for want of sufficient sail to render her steady, the only mast left speedily came by the board, and the fate of the Old James seemed inevitable. The scene which now presented itself was truly dreadful. No hope of safety remained; for, as if no circumstance of calamity that can befall a vessel should be wanting to complete her ruin, at this moment it was discovered she had sprung a leak, and was four feet deep in water above her ballast. Despair, with its companion distraction, seized on most who were on board. In the midst of the hurry and confusion of the moment, shrieks and prayers, such as despair alone could utter, mingled fearfully with the screaming of the tempest. The shouts, too, of the captain and his mates might be heard, as, even in these last moments, they attempted to give orders to such of the crew as would yet hear and obey their commands. And as the sea rolled its mountain waves, (now lifting the vessel upon their summits, and then, as they rushed back, leaving her little more than a log floating in the hollow trough thus formed by their retiring), those few merchants or traffickers who were on board, fearing the next plunge would be the last, might be seen, eagerly and readily helping, with their own hands, to cast overboard those very bales of goods on which, but a little while before, they deemed their fortunes depended. But now, death being at hand, they parted from them to enrich the ocean caves, as readily as did ever a trembling suppliant cast down rich gifts to appease the anger of some haughty tyrant from whose power there is no escaping.

The water still increasing in the hold, many hardy fellows stripped themselves almost naked, and, though spent and worn with suffering, toiled at the pumps with incessant exertion, as if a few hours of life (for more than a few hours the vessel could not struggle against so many evils), were to be purchased with as much earnestness and zeal as the eternity

that lay before them, and to which they might so soon find entrance. The sea now dashed over the decks in huge breakers, and covered the ship from stem to stern, washing away the helmsman, who had in vain attempted to keep her from a direction towards the reef.

At this moment some few persons, bent on self-preservation, determined to take their chance in the long-boat; though, in such a sea, it was little better than madness to hope it could live. Of the two, indeed, it seemed most probable that the long-boat would founder before the ship. Not more than eight persons were hardy enough to venture the experiment. One of these was an elderly man, who, though he had determined on taking his own risk, was nevertheless desirous to persuade a young person, who seemed to be his companion, to remain on board. The youth expressed his determination to follow; and, having ejaculated a short prayer for mercy and protection, was the last who leaped on board the boat, as a seaman let go the rope by which she had been lowered from the vessel; for there was great danger, lest, on the return of the wave, the boat should be upset by dashing against the side of the ship.

The vessel, after the boat had quitted her, continued her course; but scarcely had a quarter of an hour elapsed than a shrill cry was heard of,—"Breakers ahead!" All rushed on deck, and in less than five minutes the ship struck on the Eddystone reef. So tremendous was the shock, that it opened her stern; and the waves, like so many howling dogs, when the game is hunted down, rushed in upon the miserable vessel, as if eager to devour their prey. There was no hope; and all now saw their fate was inevitable, yet not immediate. What an interval for the sufferers! The thunder, "that deep and dreadful organ-pipe," seemed in mockery to return the groans and cries of agony that rose and mingled with the roar of the waves, as they came rolling on, raising on all sides their towering heads, as executioners who advance to do their office; whilst the heavens, that appeared "all on fire" with sheets of lightning, only dispelled the darkness of that fatal hour to shew a dreadful scene—a boundless and devouring deep.

Amongst the sufferers, many on board were of the puritanic sect of the times. These, thinking it their duty to die rejoicing, in defiance of the pangs of nature and the terror of the tempest, were determined to depart, as the swan is said to do, with melody on their lips. With bitter tears and quavering voices they commenced the old hymn of—

"Help, Lord, for us, thy godly men,"

whilst the not less sincere, but more mutely resolute, breathed their parting prayer in silence to Him, who, in the midst of the wildest tempest, hears the whisper of repentance in the secret soul, as heedfully as a mother who listens to the breathings of her infant's rest. But not all died thus. There were those on board to whom death was indeed "a snare," as the "sorrows of hell" compassed them about. In those dread moments the sinner quailed, and the flashes of the terrific lightning that shot before his sight were less terrible than the flashes of his own conscience, which now shewed distinctly every dark and damning spot of crime. And some poor sea-boy on board, now shed, perhaps, a bitter tear, as the thoughts of his mother's care, of his father's cot and field, his labours of the plough and harrow, crossed his mind. And then came self-reproach, that told him he had left them all to run away to sea; and God, may be, thus punished him for his disobedience; for the dying seldom fail to find Providence a just accountant. And who shall say but on the borders of eternity the mind may have an opening, some faint discernment, of those ways of the Almighty, which, so long as we are here, are, indeed, past finding out? Many a poor mariner, who was a husband, thought upon his wife, and called on God to bless her and his children, to preserve the desolate and the fatherless.

A few desperate persons cast themselves overboard on hen-coops, oars, spars, or any thing that came in their way. These were the first to meet their fate; for such as, being able swimmers, the waters did not instantly drown, were dashed upon the reef. In a few minutes the ship that had been battered by the rocks, as the breakers rolled over her their foaming eddies, split and went to pieces.

The Virginia, that narrowly escaped the dangers of the Eddystone, and lived through the tempest, now heard a wild and fearful shriek as of a hundred souls—it was the death-cry of the crew. In another minute nothing was to be seen but the black rocks and the foaming breakers that indicated the fatal reef. The roaring eddy had closed over that spot, where so many had breathed their last. A few days after, a shattered stern-post that was washed on shore, and supposed by its make and fashion to have been that of a West Indian merchantman, was all that ever came to land of the wreck of the Old James.

CHAPTER II.

But, alas, for his country! her pride is gone by,
And that spirit is broken which never would bend;
O'er the ruin her children in secret must sigh;
For 'tis treason to love her, and death to defend.
Unprized are her sons, till they 've learn'd to betray;
Undistinguish'd they live, if they shame not their sires!
And the torch that would light them through dignity's way,
Must be caught from the pile where their country expires.

MOORE'S IRISH MELODIES.

The course of our narrative now obliges us to shift the scene of action from sea to land; and to conduct the reader to a spot so enchanting, so variedly beautiful, that it is traditionally averred, that when the Spanish admiral, Medina Sidonia, who saw it but from a distance, led to our shores the Armada, in the hope of conquest, he had anticipatively appropriated to his own share of the spoil the matchless domain of Mount Edgcumbe.

Indeed, so great is its beauty, that though it becomes necessary to our narrative that we should here say something of its localities, yet we feel our weakness in undertaking the task; and fear our attempt, brief as it must be, will but appear as so many words of praise, without conveying any adequate idea of scenes so far beyond our power to delineate. We fear we may be like a certain pupil of Apelles, who, when he painted a Helen, loaded her with jewels; a circumstance which drew from his celebrated master the remark, "to make her as beautiful as she ought to be was beyond thy skill, and therefore hast thou made her fine."

Having said this by way of apology to our reader, we shall now proceed to tell him, that the peninsula of Mount Edgcumbe stretches out its majestic heights, crowned by the noblest woods, into the ocean; where the waves break over reefs of black rock that lie at the base of the cragged cliffs, as they stand, to use the lively figure of Carrington, "crowned by groups of pines, that start wildly up, tossing their dark hair on the breeze of the night." Here beauty and grandeur, pleasant woods and sunny glades, deep hollows and hanging rocks, the wild path midst precipice and chasm, the lofty pine shaken by a thousand storms, the roar of ocean, the lengthened pomp of avenues and groves, with their deep recesses of shadow and repose, all, all combine to form scenes such as

would raise to ecstasy a mind imbued with the love of nature, and would give, even to the sluggish and the dull, feelings before unknown, of wonder and delight.

At the date of our narrative, the mansion at Mount Edgcumbe was inferior in size and magnificence to what it has now become, under the directing taste of the present noble and talented representative of the Edgcumbe family. It was, at the time we describe it, a somewhat heavy building, square in form, having a round battlemented turret at each corner, and a handsome entrance in the centre, which led into the hall, the largest and best apartment, "yielding," as old Prince says, "a stately sound as you enter the same." The house stood on a rising ground of considerable elevation, that swept down in a lawn of the finest turf to the water's edge on the north, or, as it might be called, inland side of the peninsula, as it was there only separated from the opposite towns of Stonehouse and Plymouth by the waters of the Hamoaze. On either side of the lawn, that was spacious in extent, an avenue of stately elms led up to the house from the landing-place by the river. In the immediate vicinity of the dwelling might be seen groves of the loftiest trees, composed of the oak, the beech, the pine, with chestnuts and cedars, noble and spreading in their forms, venerable with antiquity. Having thus briefly sketched the situation of the house and its vicinity, we proceed to say a word or two about the owner of this delightful spot at the time of our tale.

Sir Piers Edgcumbe was one of those royalists who in the west of England had been the first to take up arms, and almost the last to lay them down, in the service of King Charles. He was a middle-aged gentleman, of great estimation; high in honour, resolute in conduct, patient in suffering innumerable hardships and afflictions, and of a courage and devotion so absolute in the cause he served, that it obtained for him the title of a desperate malignant, and the consequent reward of being persecuted and heavily fined after the parliament had got the upper hand in the west. Though his estate was diminished by these exactions, yet as it had been originally very large, he still retained a considerable property, far more than usually fell to the lot of a royalist who had undergone what was called "a merciful settlement of his delinquency."

Such had been the conduct and suffering of Sir Piers. He well knew how many had fared worse; some being stripped of all they had, like the greater part of the sequestered clergy, who were sent to roam about the wide world with nothing but the gown upon their backs, and their starving families by their side, to live or die, as it might happen, in the open

fields; whilst others were crammed into the suffocating dens of prison ships, or gaols as wretched on shore; and not a few kidnapped abroad or sold into Turkish slavery; or sometimes hanged, if no other way remained of getting rid of them.

Sir Piers well knew these things; for many a friend had he lost in one or each of these miserable ways, during the triumph of the parliament, for having so happily opened the path, and set the example, to England's liberty. Sir Piers was grateful, therefore, for his own comparatively good fortune; and as nothing softens the human heart to the sufferings of others so much as having ourselves tasted of affliction, even so did the persecution of the good knight greatly improve not only his christian patience but his temper. We have somewhere seen the improvement of an afflicted soul beautifully compared to a diamond that has passed through the process of cutting and polishing. Every cut was a wound to the precious stone; but without them, where would have been its lustre?

One of the chief failings in the character of Sir Piers had been, perhaps, too much pride in himself, and too little value for those beneath him. But this original defect was wisely chastened; and, like a good Christian, who, on being conscious of a fault, conceives it is not enough to condemn without struggling to overcome it, Sir Piers had so practically dealt by his own besetting sin as to have much subdued it. And though he was chary of his dignity, so as not to admit the freedom of bold or low-bred persons; yet to the loyal, the unfortunate, who had private worth as well as public principle to recommend them, he was a most generous friend and liberal benefactor, whatever might be their degree. But for his bounty many a poor royalist must have perished from want.

To one friend, indeed, Sir Piers was remarkably kind, from motives of compassion mingled with those of the highest esteem and regard. This more than ordinarily favoured friend was no less a person than the famous royalist of the west, Sir Hugh Piper; to whose tomb, in the beautiful church of St. Magdalen at Launceston, we once made a pilgrimage; and where the worthy knight, with his Dame Sibylla, may be seen in monumental pomp; the one in armour, and the other in brocade, "very livelily represented," to use a phrase of the time, "all in marble," and, like godly souls, as they were, kneeling and praying opposite to each other; perhaps in thankfulness for that restoration, which, it is recorded, they both lived to witness in their old age. To return from this digression respecting the knight's effigies to the knight himself.

Sir Hugh Piper in early life had been bred to commerce, and became a great Plymouth merchant, dealing largely in the

commodities of the West Indies, where he held property exclusively his own. By these means he acquired wealth sufficient to wed his Dame Sibylla, who was of a family superior to his; indeed, so ancient, that they could boast of having had grandfathers so long back as the Conquest; and, by an intermarriage with the noble house of Courtenay of Devon, claimed affinity even with the emperors of Constantinople. The English merchant, at all times a respectable character, rose into great importance during the successive reigns of Elizabeth, James, and Charles I.; a more convincing proof of the opulence of his class could not be given than by that erection, equally useful and munificent,—the Royal Exchange of Sir Thomas Gresham, built at his sole cost, during the reign of the maiden queen.

Sir Hugh Piper felt the importance of his character, and supported the consequence he had thus acquired, without giving umbrage to those towards whom he ascended, in the scale of equality, by the influence of his growing wealth; for he never assumed the bustling airs new gentlemen are apt to put on. He always remembered the time when he was apprenticed to his old master, and sat on a high stool in a little back counting-house, pricking down items, as the phrase then went, in a calves-skin ledger, from Monday morning till Saturday night. This recollection sobered him, if, for a moment, he felt some natural exultation at hearing it said, as he often did, that he was considered rich enough to buy half the families in the county, out and out, if it came to a point of money. Neither did he offend his inferiors; for he was ever kind and civil to those of his own degree, who, less fortunate or less prudent than himself, were left behind him on the ground-spoke of Fortune's wheel. He had been amongst those who suffered by, and loudly complained of, the several oppressive and arbitrary acts concerning duties on merchandise, tonnage, poundage, and ship-money; all acts that had been enforced, though certainly contrary to law, and unsanctioned by the parliament.

But when he found that the complaints made against these things, and other abuses of the government, were to be carried on as an excuse, or cover, for the worst designs of the most artful men; that the destruction of monarchy was aimed at, and that all order in church and state was to give place to the wild schemes of fanaticism, violence, and ambition, Sir Hugh Piper changed at once his sad-coloured russet suit for a goodly case of armour; turned his office into a guard-room; named his head clerk cornet elect; threw aside his steeple-crowned hat for a morion of steel, and raised a troop of horse for King

Charles at his own and sole cost; heading the same himself, with a leading staff in hand, and a sword by his side, as if he had been born and bred a soldier; and few learned the art of war more vigorously, and none practised it more bravely, than did this truly honest merchant.

Great were his successes, and as great were his honours; for, though the siege of Plymouth gave him a wound in the neck, the king created him captain of the royal castle at Exeter, where he might, in those days, overlook the whole town, without the trouble of stretching it. And though at Stratton Heights a brace of bullets whizzed through his thigh, yet being appointed constable of Launceston Castle was (as this good soldier would say, when playing upon the word) an elevation to a height greater than that on which he had received his wound; and though lastly, a severe cut from the godly sword of a psalm-singing knave at Lansdown fight had made his shoulders smart for it, yet this third blow Charles himself condescended to heal, by giving him another, which carried with it a balm to cure its own smart, and made of a very gallant soldier a very worshipful knight.

For all these repeated and high honours, Sir Hugh was not ungrateful; and as gratitude at any court is seldom declined when it comes in a substantial form, so, in that of the unfortunate Charles, it was often all he had to depend upon to supply his immediate wants. Thus, when affairs stood still, or drooped, in the west, for want of money to raise and fit out a company of men, Sir Hugh Piper's West India cottons, sugars, and rums, soon clothed the half-ragged recruits, and enabled them to drink healths, pottle deep, to the King. And when the beautiful Queen, Henrietta Maria, was fearful for want of that rare thing—gold, she should bring a royal infant into the world with a state and ceremony as bare as its own nakedness, Sir Hugh Piper's silver dishes, plates, caudle drinking cups, and ladles, all went to the melting-pot, to furnish forth royal bedding and baby clothes, fees for wise women, possets for nurses, and spoons for godmothers and gossips, at the royal Exeter lying-in of the queen.

But these were the halcyon days of Sir Hugh; for, so long as he had gold, who was more welcome at court, or who more active in the field? But, when that failed, there came "a long farewell to all his greatness." The court lords, and ladies, looked coldly upon the West Indian cotton dealer; and the gay Lord St. Jermyn (who made up in smiles for what he wanted in wit) hesitated not to smile our gallant merchant out of countenance, when he honestly complained that his welcome had declined in proportion to his purse. Sometimes,

also, Sir Hugh had supplied the means to furnish forth the court revelry, to prevent its growing dull in these melancholy times, lest there should be no sports to cheer men's fainting spirits. But now, alas! it was found, to Sir Hugh's cost (and to use a pun of his own, when adverting to the circumstance), that though the court had danced, there was no one to pay the piper. Even Charles himself, whose kind-heartedness could not bear the sight of the distress he had occasioned, and had no power to relieve, felt so much vexation at the long melancholy face, the worn doublet, and altered appearance of honest Sir Hugh, that his presence became painful to him. And the sovereign likewise recollecting how much he owed to this good subject, (and how impossible it was, in the present state of his affairs, to command one shilling to repay him) could now never even see the poor man without thinking of a debt; a kind of recollection, from the family improvidence of the Stuarts towards their friends, so very disagreeable, that it became exceedingly distressing to Sir Hugh himself; so that, rather than vex the king by remaining in his sight, he turned upon his heel, left Oxford and the court behind him, and determined, if he could no more serve Charles, except by dealing out hard blows, there should be no lack of them, so long as he could find a Nollite willing to exchange such rough wares with him, either in public or in private traffic.

But here, alas! he was again disappointed. Few were the men, amongst the common sort, whose loyalty could stand by him, or could warm their own hearts, when there was no sack nor strong ale to keep up the fire in the blood. His troop of horse murmured for want of pay; and though Sir Hugh sold all he had left that was immediately marketable, by way of giving them something in hand, and talked to them incessantly about "devotion to the royal cause," "love of the church," his own zeal, and stores forthcoming from the western Indies; yet the rogues were unsatisfied, grew mutinous; and whilst they were clamouring for "filthy lucre," some cunning agitator, or Independent (usually employed on such occasions to step in and stir up strife) whispered in their ears, that a bird in the hand was worth two in the bush; and that good pay and free quarters were awaiting them under the blue flag of the parliament: so that, before twelve hours were past, the agents of old Noll had them, body and soul, in his service; and by the rigour of his discipline, held them there, as fast bound as a certain dark personage is said to do by the luckless spirit of some wizard, who makes a compact with him to answer his present purposes of evil.

All these things were enough "to weigh a royal merchant

down;" and not long did the brave Sir Hugh resist the torrent so as to hold his head above water. He was thus shamefully deserted by his troop, by that very troop, which, like the work of an alchymist, had grown out of his own art and labour; for by his unremitting skill and pains, he had converted them from a ragged set of clowns into a good company of well-armed, able-bodied, and disciplined men. But the evil did not stop with their desertion, and Sir Hugh soon after paid the penalty for his own loyalty and the base treachery by which it was rendered unavailing. He was seized, imprisoned, and reviled, his remaining estates confiscated; and not until the private interest of a friend, on the opposite side, had exerted itself to get him off for a fine that amounted to nearly all his property, abroad as well as at home, did he once more see the blessed sun, save by the peep he might obtain of it through the narrow slit and iron bars of the walls of his prison.

At length he was once more his own master; and still possessed a few things he could call his own; namely, his liberty, his wife, a daughter grown to woman's estate, and a degree of poverty he had not only never before known, but never even anticipated. His pride was wounded when he saw himself, after all his industry, reduced to beggary; and oh! stern and unrelenting fortune, to what degradation may not those who experience thy frowns be reduced! since at the time we open this chapter, Sir Hugh Piper, the once rich merchant, the noble constable, the gallant soldier, the liberal friend and benefactor of princes, was so reduced, so humbled, as to begin the world again, on the verge of age, and in the effort to raise a second fortune, in no higher a mercantile employment than that of keeper of a store, to supply the shipping with necessaries at Plymouth. In plain English, the poor knight was become nothing more than a common ship-chandler, and that in a very small way. Esteem for his character, respect for his past gallant services, and pity for his misfortunes, made this so humbled gentleman to be selected as the favoured friend and frequent companion of the generous Sir Piers Edgcumbe. After having thus given our reader some insight into the disposition and history of this worthy, we shall finish by a sketch of his outward figure. In order to render this task the more easy, we would entreat him if he possesses Lodge's splendid work on the biography of England, to turn to the portrait of the unfortunate Lord Capel by Anthony Vandyke. Sir Hugh Piper strongly resembled that nobleman. He was that same tall, thin, Don Quixote-like figure; he had the same goggle-eyed, long-visaged, lantern-jawed appearance; the same horizontal mustachios projecting

on either side the mouth, not unlike the whiskers of a cat. In fine, there was in his *tout ensemble* the identical same expression of something out of the common way, that on first sight gave rise, in the stranger, to an inclination to laughter; till it was soon checked, and exchanged for a feeling of respect, by observing the free, open, kind, and honest character of his countenance, that won confidence and esteem.

His friend and patron (for so indeed he might be called), Sir Piers Edgcumbe, was a comely man; had a martial air, with chestnut-coloured mustachios, and pointed beard; wore his own hair, with two high peaks, one on either side the forehead, that gave it a most ample height, and was of the court fashion. An eye of clear blue, and open in its expression; a ruddy complexion and an aquiline nose, completed that head which was, taken altogether, exactly such as shewed to the utmost advantage in the richly laced, full, and flowing dress that characterized the days of Charles I., and which, treated by the tasteful pencil of Vandyke, has been made of all costumes the most elegant and graceful; or, when seen with a steel corslet, to add dignity to its gracefulness, the most imposing that ever canvass handed down to the admiration of posterity.

These worthy friends, at the time we introduce them to the reader, were seated in an apartment of Mount Edgcumbe House, known by the name of the Watchet Chamber, on account of its being hung with damask, or a sort of changeable silk in waving lines, that in our day is called watered, and applied to articles of dress more than of furniture. An old vast fireplace, with a settle on either side of it, was piled with blazing logs, that burnt merrily on handirons, or dogs, and sent their smoke up the huge tunnel, and sometimes into the room, as the eddies of the wind (for it was a very stormy day) blew them back again down the chimney. A number of high-backed ebony chairs, a cabinet, and sundry stools and cushions, constituted the chief furniture of the apartment; save that it was also distinguished by a beautiful picture of a female washing her hands under a garden fountain. This portrait represented the deceased lady Edgcumbe, and was executed by Vandyke.

A few other pictures of merit hung, likewise, in this chamber; and there was a closet, whose door, now open, shewed its contents: they spoke the character and principles of their owner; and that Sir Piers Edgcumbe was an Oxford man, of the true loyal character of that distinguished university. For there might be seen, amidst hawks' bells and other nick-nacks, sundry works of too dangerous a nature to be exhibited openly on the shelves of a library — such as the "Mercurius Acade-

micus," of the loyal Doctor Swadlin of St. John's; "the Flying Horse from Oxon," and "Pegasus taught to dance to the Tune of Lachrymæ;" "the Owl at Athens" in doggerel Latin verse; "the Lord have Mercy upon us," and many other political books of the day, that, originally printed at Oxford, had all been prohibited by an ordinance of Parliament; and were now only harboured by such malignants as thought no ordinance so valid as that of their own conscience, which taught them to run all risks rather than give up the cause of God and the King; feeling that duty to the one demanded obedience to the other.

Sir Piers and Sir Hugh had each the happiness of being a father; and each had an only daughter about the same age, who were as intimate friends in their way as were their fathers before them. That is to say, they were both loyalists; condoled together over the misfortunes of the cavaliers; knew who were the handsomest and bravest; prayed for King Charles every night and morning; wandered over Mount Edgcumbe in company; read, sang, or played the lute together as constantly as if they had been twin born, and were seldom apart but on necessity.

Sir Piers sat with his friend, Sir Hugh, after dinner; and at the time we opened this chapter both were silent. They had played one game of chess, but neither of them feeling much in the mood for that most noble and intellectual of all games, the pieces were left standing on the board without being called again into action; and whilst Sir Piers sat leaning his elbow on the table and looking intently at the fire, Sir Hugh, who relished much the choice tobacco he had in better days been accustomed to import from the West Indies, now reclined in his chair, enjoying its fumes in long columns of smoke, as at intervals he whiffed, and then quaffed, from a small silver cup, some spiced wine of excellent flavour that stood near him on the hospitable board. He had called on Sir Piers in the morning to ask after his health, as it was often his practice to do so, when the growing storm occasioned that good knight to insist on his remaining to dinner; an invitation that had been readily and gladly accepted by his honest-hearted and humble friend Sir Hugh.

CHAPTER III.

He's truly valiant that can wisely suffer
The worst that man can breathe; and make his wrongs
His outsides; to wear them like his raiment, carelessly,
And ne'er prefer his injuries to his heart,
To bring it into danger.

SHAKSPEARE.

As the two friends thus sat, sometimes conversing on public matters, and at others on their own, the pelting of the rain against the windows, the shrill piping of the wind, the roar of Ocean, and now and then, a clap of thunder, like the discharge of ordnance at a distance, gave them (whilst they very naturally told each other, it was a stormy afternoon) that indefinable feeling of comfort, and self-congratulation, which all men are apt to experience whilst sitting over a warm fire, well housed and free from danger, as the pitiless storm without tells them what their fellow-creatures must suffer who are exposed to it.

Sir Hugh talked much about it; and told tales of the hurricanes in the "still vexed Bermudas;" islands which were then considered, on account of their frequent storms, as being literally given up to devils, as far as air, wind, and water, were concerned. To all this Sir Piers listened; but not as if he felt an interest in the discourse, for his eye was still fixed on the fire, his head supported on one hand, and his foot beating upon the large square block of marble that had been dug out of one of his own quarries in Devon, and was now converted into a hearth. At length he spoke, and abruptly.

"I have been thinking, Sir Hugh Piper," said he to his friend, "that I have at last fathomed the cause of this sad failure in Kent. Hales, and those noble gentlemen who dared in the very teeth of the Parliament to assemble themselves together, to issue commissions in his Majesty's name, and finally awaited but the hour when to strike a blow for the deliverance of our sovereign, would never thus have failed, but that they wanted prudence to temper their zeal. Their plan was good, but their execution of it hasty and imperfect; they should have watched till other counties were ready to join them, and then have struck the blow. I know not where this will end. To my thinking it is checkmate with the king (he

took up the royal piece from the board as he spoke), unless something is done, and that suddenly. What think you of these matters?"

"What do I think?" replied Sir Hugh, "as I have long thought, that, like the great hurricane, which, in the year forty-two, destroyed all my crop of canes, such evils come not by chance: for the sins of the kingdom are we visited with these woes; it is no otherwise; and yet am I no Puritan who speak it. We say the Parliament did this, or the Parliament undid that; but I say the devil did it, who, like as he had empire given to try the patience of faithful Job by sore afflictions and calamities, even so now has he the spirit of the Parliament given to him to try the patience of our suffering King."

"It is too true," said Sir Piers.

"We see a fellow like Cromwell busy to do evil, and call it good," continued Sir Hugh; "but what is he more than a 'Jack in the clock house,' that strikes when the hour comes? but the devil is in the wheel that moves the machinery. I have no patience with the times; and that men should thus sit down quietly, even as we do now, when such things are acting. Where is honour? Where is place? Verily do I think that Lucifer is in the parliament; and there sits he on the King's throne, with no more reverence than if it were an ale bench."

"In the parliament!" exclaimed Sir Piers, who caught the warm tone with which his companion had concluded his last speech, "rather say in the army; for what now is the Parliament better than a pack of hounds, that have hunted down the royal game at the cry of their leader, and are speedily whipped off like curs when no longer wanted for his profit! I tell thee the Parliament played the part of an old wizard, raised a devil, whose name is Legion: but not all the art of all the parliaments combined could lay him, so long as he leads an army at his beck. What a man is Cromwell! I could almost find it in my heart to applaud him for his very daring, and the power with which he carried on rebellion, usurpation, tyranny! for doth not the poet say—respect for his great place, and let the devil be sometimes honoured for his burning throne?"

"Oliver Cromwell," said Sir Hugh, "always reminds me of a pirate ship, that rides the high seas under false colours to draw in the unwary, till a royal merchantman comes in sight; then your pirate pounces upon her at once, boards, or makes conditions, as if he carried the law of the high seas in his own bottom; and often does he sink the ship, after rifling her of all her wealth. Thus has Cromwell done by the good bark of

Britain's sovereignty; and I wish that he may spare the captain, who so long stood at the helm and defied the storm. But he, alas, is now captive!—a prisoner in Carisbrook Castle, whilst a kingdom looks on, and makes an idol of him who has turned on the very prince in whose behalf he affected to take up arms!"

"Nay, for the matter of that," said Sir Piers, "he is more feared than loved; for, trust me, there are those of his own party who would never thus submit to be ruled by him, were it not for his army, his agitators, his levellers, and his psalm-singing swash-bucklers, whom he has so clad in iron, that they are called his lobsters, to express their casing! I say again, it is fear that rules men's minds as they look on Cromwell. It is fear which has caused the late calm; but as a learned and ejected pastor said to me but last week—'like those of the Dead Sea, such calms are a curse.' Oh, England, England! when I look on thee, I could weep for the madness of thy people. Thou hadst a sovereign, mild, good, and righteous; some faults, the faults of humanity, and of his great state, were his. But what were these, arbitrary though they might be, when compared to the arbitrary acts of his predecessors? Yet not satisfied, you have plucked down this sweet lovely rose, and planted there——"

"A bottle-nosed old Roundhead," said Sir Hugh, interrupting the elegant quotation of his friend, "who is as cunning as a fox and as fierce as a tiger. Why there would be no end to the catalogue did I rehearse his qualities. Imprimis, he hath no birth nor elevation to recommend him; but then he is full willing to raise others, therefore is he a friend to the gallows, for many an honest cavalier hath he hanged, as high as Haman, for no sin but that of loyalty. Secondly, he loves not to see men exalt themselves; therefore doth he trample on all his betters. He would have freedom for all men; no doubt freedom in spirit; for the bodies of such as would be troublesome to him are fast locked in prison. He would have no arbitrary taxes, no monopolies by kings; and to prevent the possibility of this sin, hath he hurled down the king, laid the strong hand on all estates, whilst your committee men and sequestrators act as jackals to the lion."

"And bring all flesh to his den," said Sir Piers.

"And then for quarreling, who is like him?" continued the vehement Sir Hugh: "why he quarreled with all the bishops; ay and with the judges to boot, for the loss of Pryn's ears; and so in requital he strikes you off a score or two of heads, and says his prayers for it before breakfast. And then the King, the King would have an army of Papists to make poor Eng-

I recovered my liberty and lost my estate. And look you now; when once again I talk of King Charles and my sword, my old comforter, the cheerer of my prison, the companion of my musings, my tobacco-pipe, snaps as I hold it in my hand."

Sir Hugh closed his narrative of the standard with much emotion; indeed with more emotion than the incident of the broken pipe could warrant, were not his great and repeated misfortunes considered. These had weakened his spirits, though not his principles; for the habitually unfortunate often become the habitually timid; they start at shadows, and see evils when they do but fear them. Sir Piers observed this foolish accident had awakened, like a spark on a train of gunpowder, all the slumbering painful recollections of Sir Hugh's past calamities; and, ever kind and thoughtful, he now spoke with much feeling.

"Sir Hugh, I have done wrong, I fear, in hinting to you a plan, a mad plan, may be, which some gentlemen are not unwilling to undertake, as a last effort to rescue the King from his hard bondage. But you have suffered much, too much, already; you have escaped these tempestuous times, after having manfully struggled with them, like a shipwrecked mariner, who saves nothing but life. You are a married man, and a father; once again are you endeavouring to provide for your family a better fortune. I do you wrong to put it in hazard."

"You do me no wrong, no wrong in the world, Sir Piers," cried his friend, "no more wrong than when the merchants of Exeter offered me a share in the galliasse that was to go forth on venture to the Bermudas. I accepted it, and the ship foundered; but I have ever held myself indebted to their kindness in making me a sharer of the benefit, had there been benefit, in their schemes. I have, Sir Piers—and I hope I may be pardoned thus speaking in my own commendation, considering the occasion—but I have, Sir, once had the honour of ruining myself and family, for the King: and if I feel it a duty to do so again, I would wish to know who shall say me nay?"

"Not I, my dear Sir Hugh," said his friend, "if such is your resolution, as I offer you no venture in which I do not share myself, to the full, the same peril. But your wife and daughter?"

"Must not be thought of, must not be named: and yet I love them both, Sir Piers, as dearly as I love the light of day, or the blood that warms my heart. But if they, too, must suffer in the cause, why, heaven's will be done; and if the husband and father die to serve God's church and the king, I

think not He will leave the widow and the fatherless without comfort. So I will even trust them to Him, and not look back; but fix my eye on my duty, as the pilot does on the card, certain that it will guide him better than he could guide himself without it. But soft! we are interrupted."

"Who comes hither?" said Sir Piers, hastily rising up, as if he feared any part of their discourse should have been overheard by an eavesdropper.

"'Tis I, your honour, Cornet Davy," said a voice that spoke without the door; and immediately after, Cornet Davy followed this announcement of his own name, which he had sent before him, into the room.

CHAPTER IV.

The broken soldier, kindly bade to stay,
Sat by his fire, and talk'd the night away:
Wept o'er his wounds or tales of sorrow done,
Shoulder'd his crutch, and show'd how fields were won.
GOLDSMITH'S *Deserted Village.*

THE person who announced himself as Cornet Davy, was somewhat advanced in years; had a grave and respectable appearance, a head white as wool, and a countenance as long and as dolorous as that of an undertaker. The Cornet (elevated to that station when Sir Hugh raised his troop of horse at the beginning of the rebellion) was originally that worthy man's head clerk; and one who, as well as presiding over the ledger, could also, in the absence of his master, bargain with foreign merchants, or with home and retail dealers. In his more noble and military capacity, Richard Davy had not entirely forgotten the habits of his original calling; so that, notwithstanding he had displayed much spirit and aptitude as a soldier, on the desertion of the troop (soon after the taking of Exeter by Fairfax), he very naturally and very quietly fell into his old place; not only as head, but now, alas! as sole clerk to his beloved patron, whom he still faithfully attended in his more humble and reduced traffic of a ship-chandler.

A fondness for distinction, a feeling of honour, not to be condemned, which caused him to entertain some little pride for his past brave deeds, made honest Davy still ambitious of being designated by the title of Cornet; though his military appellative not unfrequently led him into trouble, as he had borne it on the losing side of the question. An old sword and a brace of petronels, that had been the companions of his military career, were still cherished, as trophies of honour in a fallen cause. Like the spirit of their owner, they were ever held ready for action at the call of duty to God, the king, and Sir Hugh Piper, of loyal and noted bravery. If wishing well, and praying earnestly and watching incessantly for the welfare of King Charles, could have set him free, the zeal alone of Cornet Davy would have done the business; and such an index was the honest man's face to the feelings of his mind, that when he daily appeared, with the Diurnal* in

* A newspaper of the time.

one hand, and a pipe in the other, to sit an hour or so after dinner with his beloved and condescending master, Sir Hugh knew exactly how affairs stood with the king, by only looking at old Davy's face. He needed not to read a single paragraph of the Diurnal, to ascertain when the royalists had made a stir, had risen in arms, or were beaten by their adversaries; for Cornet Davy's looks told it all.

If any thing good happened, or only the hope of good, he seldom staid, after his gentle rap at the door, the order for its opening; but would enter the room confidently, and with a flourish of the hand in which he held the Diurnal, in the same manner he used to flourish his pike, he would exclaim (as his little grey eyes sparkled with delight, and every feature shone with the brightness of joy), "There! Sir Hugh, there is news worth the bringing; the round head rascals will have their deserts at last; and we shall once more write C. R. in our banners without the fear of its being called a prohibited entry." But if, on the contrary, the Cornet brought bad intelligence with him, he thought it made itself known fast enough, and therefore was in the less haste to speak it. On such occasions he was usually silent, or would only answer Sir Hugh's inquiry of "What news, Cornet?" with a shake of the head or a longdrawn sigh, and some ejaculatory "Alack! alack!" and "Who would have thought it; but God's will be done; this world is not a place for honest men, I trow," etc.

It was somewhat unusual to see the Cornet had quitted his snug nook in his master's house, to find his way to Mount Edgcumbe, uncalled for, in so stormy an afternoon; though he was by no means a stranger to the generous hospitality of Sir Piers. But no sooner had he now opened the door, and shewed a face in which every feature bore the most marked expression of dismay, than Sir Hugh involuntary started up, and asked, in the tone of one who expects to hear bad tidings, "For God's sake, what's the matter, Davy? What brings you here?"

"The heaviest news," replied the Cornet, as he made an effort to speak with resolution, "that ever I had to tell, since I told your honour of the loss of the Double Rose and all her cargo; or that Sir Bevil Grenville was down when he charged at the head of the King's horse. I came through hail and rain, wind and storm—for I could not bide home with a bursting heart—I came on purpose, noble Sirs, to tell you both that Colchester had yielded!"

"Colchester yielded!" exclaimed Sir Piers and Sir Hugh in one breath.

"Ay, Colchester has yielded," repeated the old Cornet,

"and Sir Charles Lucas and Sir George Lisle are both dead men."

"Dead!" said Sir Hugh; "I grieve to hear it. Why, they would stand at their post till the bullets flew about their ears like hail: and every Roundhead would light a match and fire his harquebuss to try which could bring down one or other of the boldest cavaliers that ever followed Prince Rupert or Prince Maurice in these wars. As I have heard, they valiantly defended Colchester, and against odds. No doubt they fell before the post of honour."

"No, Sir Hugh," said Cornet Davy, "that they did not; they fell before a wooden post in a vile ale-yard at Colchester; where they were shot to death by order of—of that cold-blooded villain, Ireton."

"Shot to death! murdered! by Ireton's command! By Ireton, the most heartless, cruel, revengeful Roundhead of them all! Davy, this is bad news indeed: I would rather have lost my right arm, than that the king should have lost such men as these. The one famous for foresight, and the other for action to do him service. But tell thy tale, Davy; I will take patience to hear it, seeing that dead, dead, is the end of all men; for in peace or in war it comes to that at last."

"Ay, that it does, Sir Hugh," said the Cornet. "Death closes every man's account, and strikes the balance whether he will or not; and woe be to him if there is a deficit, as your honour says, of the yearly summing up. Death, Sir Hugh, always puts me in mind of a bond debt; it cannot be shifted, there is no vouching by security, and the principal must answer for himself."

"In truth must he, honest Davy," said Sir Hugh; "and well is it for him when all his outstanding debts have been honestly called in and discharged. But to thy tale, man; yet tell it not dry. Though thou hast too much of moisture about thee to fear that already: for the rain has not spared thy old doublet, nor sorrow thy old eyes, so that both drop tears: yet drink a cup, Cornet; 'twill help thee to get through thy tale. You said Colchester had yielded, and that those gallant gentlemen were slain."

"Ay," replied Cornet, "they were slain; and if it had but been in action, it would have been a pleasure to weep for them; but one can't do so for the murdered, for somehow one's blood boils up against the murderer; and a man is not cool enough for crying, like a woman, when he would shew a better resentment of the crime. Colchester hath yielded; Sir Charles Lucas and Sir George Lisle became prisoners to

Ireton; and in cold blood were they shot to death, by order of that Round-head captain of psalm-singing cut-throats and thieves."

"To die thus!" said Sir Hugh; "alas! it is grievous to think upon it! Noble gentlemen, they shall not die without vengeance. Cornet, hast thou forgot thy old vocation? Could'st thou once more lay down thy quill as clerk to the broken-down Plymouth merchant, and take up thy pike, and once more follow to the field Sir Hugh Piper, the soldier and knight, did occasion offer to do service to King Charles?"

"Would I follow!" exclaimed old Davy; "ay, marry; I would follow such a master, and in such a cause, to the end of the world."

"Bethink you, Sir Hugh," said Sir Piers; "what I mentioned but now is, though in agitation, yet uncertain, unshaped. Prudence, therefore, is necessary; and should this good man——"

"Fear him not, Sir Piers; my life for it, Cornet Davy is as true as oak; ay, and as close, too, if occasion demands it. Besides, I cannot act without his assistance. Davy is to me as necessary as a scout is to a general, or a covered way to a beleaguered fortress. For, look you, Sir Piers, did I shew my head too much abroad in these matters, it would breed suspicion. One would ask, 'What does the old malignant in such a place, or at such a time? There is something in the wind for the king's cause, or the old piper would not play up such a tune.' But Davy, my invoice man, my keeper of stores and collector of moneys, my servant, clerk, and friend, my very right hand, as I may say; to see him stir abroad excites no wonder; and he shall come and go between me and the king's friends with no more suspicion than did Duke Hamilton, when he played at bo-peep, as Scout, or Double-face, between the king and the Scots."

"I am satisfied Cornet Davy may be trusted," said Sir Piers; "and ere the present week expires, I hope to receive such advices from many friends, some distant, some near, as may bring matter full of import for our consideration. Then we will talk further on this business: at present, the chief difficulty to be apprehended is that of obtaining in secret a sufficient supply of arms."

"Never despair of it," cried Sir Hugh, "worse difficulties than that hath wit and patience overcome; though not without the aid of money. Let me see: I can still do something in that way myself; for when my rascally troop deserted, because pay-day depended on trade winds, and it had its date with certain cargoes of rum and sugar (the landing of which

never found a place in my calendar), why then Davy and I contrived to secure and conceal a certain quantity of arms, both for horse and man; and, though rusted for want of use, the scowering of a day would be all that is needed. Cornet, hast thou the item of our armoury about thee?"

"May it please your honour," said the Cornet "I pricked down the same on the back of the old muster-roll, and it is ever in my pocket in my book of sundries: here will it be found." And fumbling within a huge pocket, that like a well, seemed to have a far and deep bottom, the military accountant produced a fair calfskin book with silver clasps. "Ay, here is the old muster-roll, sure enough," said Davy, "with the names of killed, wounded, and missing, as a closing item of the account: at the head of the latter stands one who was never found—Thomas Lighthead, I see."

"'Twas a misnomer, Davy," said Sir Hugh; "that fellow's heels were ever lighter than his head; he was the first to run away, and turn tail like a cur, at the sight of the Roundheads: but give us not the names of my old troop, but rather let us hear what we have left of their harness."

"Marry," said the Cornet, "for horse defensive armour, there is pricked down six backs and three breast-pieces, and one pot, pistol proof."

"I would the back-pieces had been fewer, and the breast of greater number; seeing that your back-piece is most fitted to one of Lighthead's valour; its chief use being for those who run away. As to the pot, it is solitary: and though it can cover but one trooper's head, it may, if needs must, stand cook for a regiment of stomachs. I would the meat, though, were as certain as the pot; for how, alas! without money, shall I feed another troop? But go on."

"Ten swords and five cases of pistols; their barrels not under fourteen inches in length. Of horse furniture, one great saddle, or pad, with bars, and straps to affix the holsters."

"That is my own, Davy," said Sir Hugh, "my own furniture for old Hector, who bore me through many a hard day's toil. He is of little use now; wounded in the shoulder, cracked in the wind, and parcel-blind with age; a worn-down old war horse, fit, may be, for an old soldier. What muskets have we, Davy?"

"Somewhere about a dozen; six collars of bandeliers, with store of match, some sixty yards or so, and a sufficient complement of bullets."

"Good: what more?" said Sir Hugh.

"I have bethought me," replied the provident store-keeper, "that some of the commodities in which we traffic with the

captains of the ships, may be pressed into his Majesty's service; such as the tumbrels we ship for Holland."

"They will serve us as baggage carts, though small," said Sir Hugh, "and wheel off the wounded. What more?"

"Logs, and pitch, and rope, are things often wanted in storming a town, your honour," said Davy.

"The logs and the pitch," cried Sir Hugh, as his eyes sparkled with delight, at thus hearing his own stores catalogued out for the King's service; "the pitch and the logs shall serve to smoke old Fairfax out of his close hiding at Exeter, as they smoke a fox out of his hole, if nothing else will do it, to make him come on for a tussle; and as for the rope, the Roundheads shall have it, gratis, at their hanging."

"And store of canvass and blue lights yet remain to be entered in this present account," continued Davy.

"The canvass," cried Sir Hugh, "may help clothe the ragged royalists in doublets and shirts; for the blue lights, Davy, they are signals of distress, and I trust his Majesty will not need them; though, in faith, this seems an evening like enough to exhibit many such a candle of sorrow on the high seas; for the wind blows and howls like a fury, and the sea roars like a wild bear. Many a mast will go by the board to night. Is thy account of arms and ammunition, in my storehouse, at an end? What more have I, that may be useful in the King's service?"

"Nothing," replied Davy, "but your honour's own worthy person, and one Richard Davy, your poor clerk and servitor, who, under your favour, and the King's commission, once wrote himself Cornet in the great current account of his Majesty's faithful friends."

"Thou shalt write Captain-Lieutenant an' we once more take the field; and that will be promotion for you, Davy," said Sir Hugh.

"I will get me some half dozen trusty followers; and then, Sir Piers, say but the time and the place, and honest Davy once more shoulders his pike; and I, as the brave royalist said to the rebel parliament on quitting their house, as they jeeringly bade him go home and arm himself,—I will find me a good sword, and take good heart, and I doubt not to find a good cause in which to exercise both."

"And successfully, I trust," said Sir Piers, "if all goes well. Why, Sir Hugh, nothing seems to subdue your resolution; you look as cheerful, and speak with as much spirit now, as you did whilst you stood before the siege of Plymouth, when that compound of folly, vice, and bravery, Sir Richard Grenville, led you on."

"Ay," replied Sir Hugh, with a sigh, "had Sir Richard been but like his noble brother, Sir Bevil Grenville, never would the king have now been a prisoner in Carisbrook Castle. But the licence, the misrule, the violence of that Sir Richard, and the debauched, reckless conduct of Goring, ruined the king's affairs in the west. Drunken and swaggering cavaliers were no match for the fierce, determined Independents, and the cool, sober, psalm-singing knaves of the parliament. But Sir Bevil Grenville! he was, indeed, a leader: a nobler courage, or a gentler mind, were never wedded to make a sweeter union in the christian or the man. Thou hast not forgot Sir Bevil, Davy, I trow?"

"No, your honour, nor Stratton Heights; where Sir Hugh Piper, with Sir Ralph Hopton, Grenville, and the gallant Slanning by his side, scaled the hill, in spite of a raking fire from a couple of minion drakes, that swept off the men, whole ranks at a time, just as a sickle crops the harvest of the mower."

"And the Earl of Stamford and all his horse fled," cried Sir Hugh, "and Stratton Heights that day bore the banner of king Charles as proudly as did ever the Tower of London: and though we went to battle neither with a Bible in one hand nor with rebellion in the other; though we sang not God's praises through the nose, and broke his laws in the heart, yet we cavaliers forgot not to say our prayers for the victory. Stratton Heights stood for our high altars, the banner of our king for their canopy, as, with unwashed hands from the contest, bleeding, wounded, dying, or safe in life and limb, with one voice we blessed the God of battles for the victory! Thou hast not forgot the day, Cornet?"

"No, nor Lansdowne fight either," cried the Cornet; "but that victory came like the fortunes of a new gentleman, one made rich by inheritance; all in black for the very cause of his rejoicing, the old honour being just departed. Sir Bevil Grenville fell; and his loss outweighed all the victory; yet was it a proud day, Sir Hugh, when you rushed up to the iron saker, that swept down your men as they ascended, and spiked it, though loaded to the mouth; as I, with my pole-axe, felled the gunner to the earth."

"And then the men shouted," said Sir Hugh, "Lansdowne and victory!"

"And King Charles!" exclaimed old Davy, raising his voice, as if again partaking the enthusiasm of victory.

"And again may that glad shout be repeated," cried Sir Piers, who caught the fire of enthusiasm from his friend and old follower, "again may that become the joyful shout of all

the west. Join me, friends,—fill up to the brim! I pledge this cup to the success of our enterprise, and the deliverance of the king, whom God preserve, and set free in all happiness."

"And may his enemies fall, never to rise again. The very hope of our enterprise warms my old heart with joy," said Sir Hugh. "I could dance, leap, and sing, at the thoughts of once more turning out for the good old cause. Thou hast not forgot, Sir Piers, that song of Alexander Brome (the poet of Royalists—the very Magnus Apollo, as I may call him, of the cavaliers), which thus goes, though a better voice than mine should troll the tune:—

"Come, pass about the bowl to me;
A health to our distressed king;
Though we 're in hold, let cups go free;
Birds in a cage may freely sing.

"The ground doth tipple healths apace,
When storms do fall, and shall not we?
A sorrow dares not shew his face,
When we are ships, and sack's the sea."

"Come pass about the bowl to me." Here Sir Piers and the Cornet caught the spirit of the chorus, even as they had before caught from each other the all-prevailing spirit of loyalty, so ardent in the breasts of the old cavaliers. All sorrow was for the moment forgotten in that sea of sack, the theme of song; and they now all three joined in a full and loud chorus, that certainly made itself heard through the sundry doors and panelings, by which they were fenced, to a very distant part of the house.

Ere the chorus was ended, and whilst those words, "Birds in a cage may freely sing," yet quavered from the lips of old Davy and Sir Hugh, a side door was softly opened, and a couple of heads, one as bright as that of a laughing Hebe, and the other no bad representative of a companion goddess in beauty and vivacity, thrust themselves in between an opening in the hanging arras that concealed this door of the apartment. The beautiful heads thus displayed were each covered with a quantity of hair, smooth on the crown, but falling full about the neck, in a thousand small ringlets of clustering curls, straying and twining like the tendrils of the vine. A single drop-pearl that hung from each ear, peeped forth amid all this redundance of tresses; a style of ornament, and of wearing the hair, that Vandyke has rendered matchless in taste and elegance by his picture of Sacharissa, Dorothy Sydney, or in that of the beautiful queen of the unfortunate Charles.

The laughing Hebe was the first of these twins in beauty

who now spoke:—"What," cried she, as she came forward, with an air of playful ease,—'birds in a cage may freely sing!' Ay, marry, but not songs that would endanger their necks, I fancy, if the pretty foolish warblers knew how much consequence is now-a-days attached to a song. In good sooth, gentlemen, I trust you have no eaves-droppers; else would your carol be literally fulfilled, and a dungeon in Plymouth Castle, or the town cage, would furnish one for such royal birds as you are. Nay, an' singing be your sport, I see not how your burthen could go roundly with the tune, without my aid. I would sing solo for less than a cup of sack; and not all minstrels would be thus easily satisfied, since music came begging into the halls of the great."

"What! my pretty blossom of the mount, my heath-bell of Devon, my fair Robina," said Sir Hugh Piper, "I will give thee a better payment than a sack posset for thy melody; I will kiss thy sweet lips, an' thou wilt sing to me."

"Nay, Sir Hugh," replied Robina Edgcumbe,—for it was the daughter of Sir Piers who now spoke,—"that may not be; kissing, they say, goes by favour; and here stands one who has a better right to yours than I can have,—your own dear child, Mistress Agnes Piper, to whom you have not spoken this fair day."

"In faith, pretty Mistress Robina," said Sir Hugh, "thy words, like a Roundhead's conscience, speak true and false at the same time: true, inasmuch as I have not seen nor spoken with Agnes since I came hither; and false, inasmuch as the day is too foul to merit the fair term which but even now you gave to it. Agnes, my child, God bless thee! Kiss thy old father, Agnes, and then fill him up another cup of sack. Why, Agnes, so great is the love of thy friends here to thee, thou dost almost live at Mount Edgcumbe. I fear thou dost tarry too long, and art cumbersome."

"No, Sir Hugh," said Sir Piers Edgcumbe, "you speak two wrong things in one sentence: for you wrong our love to this young lady to fancy she could weary us, and again you injure her, by underrating the value of her company. My pretty goddaughter, Mistress Agnes Piper, I trust will ever look upon the child of her godfather, Robina, here, as a sister, and on Mount Edgcumbe as her home, whenever she chooses to make it such."

"And how dost pass thy hours and days, Agnes?" said her fond father, as he took the cup she now handed to him, and gazed in her face with a look of the most perfect satisfaction. "Why, girl, the air of this sweet mount breathes health to thee; for the roses that used to be seen at thy breast-knot

have strayed to thy cheeks, and there they glow as if full blown in June. Thou art a loving guest, I hope, to thy friends, and a kind, a useful, and obliging ——"

"Mistress Agnes is all that a father could wish, Sir Hugh, I do assure you," said Sir Piers.

"But not all that your goodness merits, my kind godfather," replied Mistress Agnes, blushing; and turning to her father, she added, "we are not idle, dear sir. At morn, we are up with the lark, to hear him sit and sing on the old white-blossomed thorn in the park; and then we pluck wild flowers, and learn their names; or ramble among the paths in the cliffs, and wander down to the beech, and look at that noble sight, the ocean, as it sends its billows, foaming and breaking, to the shore. And above all, we love to gaze on some tall ship, as she keeps on her way without effort, steady and silent in her motion, to see her gently rise and fall, in regular succession, to the solemn undulation of the waves, like one who marches to well-timed music. Oh, it is a sight to inspire the dullest fancy, to warm the coldest heart, to——"

"Why, how now, Agnes, girl?" said Sir Hugh: "thou art at thy old flights, I see, talking poetry in prose as fast as thought can supply the fancy with words; thou wilt become mazed with poetry, girl."

"Nay, she is so already, my dear Sir Hugh," cried Robina, the Hebe, "Mistress Agnes Piper is all poetry; head, heart, and soul. And then she has a fancy for music—in that respect she is almost as bad as myself; so that her lute is almost the companion of her pillow."

"Is it so?" said Sir Hugh; "then, pr'ythee, girls, sing to us instead of prattling thus fast about it, and then leave us. What wilt thou sing?"

"Anything you please," replied Robina. "I will but fetch my lute;" and away she went like a bounding fawn.

"And what will you have me sing, sir?" said Agnes.

"Something of thine own, girl," said Sir Hugh; "if I must hear poetry, I would rather hear what is thine than another's, since a father may be better pleased than a critic with such matters, and I know thy fancy."

By this time Mistress Robina had returned with the lute: the two friends were soon seated, and their fond fathers forgot for awhile their plots and their politics, in the delighted feelings called up by seeing two lovely beings, so near and dear to them, in all the gracefulness of youth, innocence, and beauty, breathing notes of sweetness to the soft concord of the lute.—

THE ARTIFICE OF LOVE.*

'Tis said that Love's a naked boy:
Rather, he's dressed in close disguise;
He's boldest when he seems most coy;
And wholly on his art relies.

As Proteus, such his subtle frame,
He's ever changing, ne'er at rest:
Sometimes like ice, and now like flame,
He spreads his influence o'er the breast.

With Friendship's confidential air
He wins your unsuspecting heart;
Then, tangled in his wily snare,
He wounds it with his hidden dart.

With sobs of grief, and tears of woe,
He comes in Pity's sad attire:
But, ah! those tears, that treacherous flow,
Quench not, but rouse his dreaded fire.

Then, cautioned of his arts, beware,
Beware to take him to thy breast;
Or never canst thou hope to share
A moment's peace, a moment's rest.

* For this copy of Mistress Agnes Piper's verses, we are indebted to an antiquarian friend and poet of Devon, Edward A. Bray.

CHAPTER V.

——— a piteous, fearful sight,
A noble vessel labouring with the storm.

MATURIN'S *Bertram.*

As Agnes concluded her song, she sighed, and said, "I know not how it is, but I feel this afternoon so little in harmony with my lute, that I could weep instead of sing, did I indulge the spirit of melancholy that seems disposed to creep upon me; and yet I know not wherefore it should be so."

"Why, the dull weather affects you, may be, girl," said Sir Hugh; "for, sooth to say, to hear the wind and sea roar so in concert together, and to look on yonder clouds, as black as midnight, that seem to be bringing up a fresh supply of thunder, lightning, hail, and rain, for the old witches who deal in storms, were enough to affect fanciful minds and weak spirits like thine. Here, girl, taste the sack in my cup, it will dispel megrims; it ever does so with your mother, when she has such low affections."

"Look!" exclaimed Robina, who stood near the window, "only look; if there is not master Hezekiah Hornbuckle coming up to the house all through the storm; and the wind blows so hard that he can scarcely keep on hat or cloak: only see how he turns and stops, and turns again to battle with the gust that nearly carries him off his legs."

"And who is Hezekiah, my pretty sweetheart?" said Sir Hugh.

"He is the new minister that I mentioned the other day to you," said Sir Piers, replying for his daughter; "he is a Presbyterian puritan, lately appointed to succeed that reverend divine of the Church of England, Master John Newte, who was turned out of his living, and has since suffered such hardships as few persons, not an eye-witness to them, would credit in the relation."

"The crop-eared hypocrite!" said Sir Hugh: "how dares he approach your house?"

"To be plain with you, Sir Hugh, he is not the worst of his class, though a puritan and a preacher. He is somewhat of an honest middle-man; and on this account it is that we have him here."

"Let me tell you all about him, Sir Hugh," said Robina; "Cromwell, or Ireton, or Fairfax, wishing to lead astray the poor silly people of Exeter, as they called them, from their loyalty, sent down some half dozen of these mad preachers to repeat to them all that had ever been uttered by the prophets themselves against profane and wicked kings; charging them to expound all such texts as immediately pointing at the person of Charles Stuart. Now this Hezekiah was amongst the chosen for the work; but he proving what is called an honest middle-man, and not being zealous enough in the work, was turned out of that vineyard, and sent down here to a more retired village, where it was not thought of much consequence if he did good or harm. And so ends my picture of Hezekiah: you will find it a likeness."

"But not a finished one, Robina," said Agnes; "for all the finer touches are forgotten. You have only half painted Hezekiah; and though I am no Vandyke to supply the graces which you do not seem to feel in his character, yet I will tell you that, though a puritan, he is sincere, a rare virtue, I grant you, in these times. I like Hezekiah so well, that if he were but a loyalist, I should think him a wise and a good man."

Scarcely had Mistress Agnes concluded the last sentence, when the subject of her remarks appeared in the room, and presented to the little party at Mount Edgcumbe the person of a plain elderly man, in whose countenance there was a deep, rather than a stern expression, with brilliant grey eyes, whose glance could be kind as well as penetrating. Like all the puritan ministers of his time, he had his hair cut so close round his head, that it bordered on the ridiculous, and lessened, at first sight, the reverence which such a countenance was well calculated to inspire. A suit of russet, the Geneva cloak of blue (the well-known garment of a disciple of Calvin), a pair of falling bands, with a little close black silk cap, formed his attire: and the figure of the wearer, as it moved with a slow and somewhat stately pace—as a religionist whose very steps, like his thoughts, should have in them a contemplative character—was not without dignity, nor altogether devoid of that easy motion which shews the gentleman even in the management of his limbs.

As Hornbuckle entered, every one saw that he must have been for some time exposed to the storm; as his steeple-crowned hat, which he wore over his scull cap, and did not offer to remove from his head, dripped like the eaves of a roof; and his cloak, "heavy with its drink," imparted it, in no small quantities, to the polished oak floor and the carpets over which he passed.

Sir Piers and Robina exclaimed, almost in one breath, "How wet you are! What will you have? How came you hither through such a storm?" and Agnes offered to help him off with his dripping cloak; but Hezekiah, who looked greatly agitated, waved his hand, as if he were beginning the exordium of a sermon, and refusing all assistance, exclaimed in a loud voice, like one addressing a congregation, "Good lack! I heard it myself, I heard the guns with my own ears, as I went down to the bottoms of the high cliffs; and the earth with her bars was about me for my security; and I looked out on the great deep, in the midst of the seas; and I saw it, and my heart waxed faint within me, and I turned away for fear, for I would not see their end."

"Good lack! Master Hezekiah," said Robina, "nor will you let us see the beginning, if you go on thus. Do leave exclaiming, and tell us what has chanced."

"And take a cup of sack," said Sir Piers, "to keep your heart warm; for you are wet to the skin, and will fall sick of a great cold."

"Talk not of cold, nor of sack, nor of such as I, who am as a nursling, or a lamb in the fold, or a garnered fowl—safe in all comfort; but think of the poor perishing wretches out yonder, and fly to their aid; and if it be God's will there may be a saving of the fugitives from Tarshish—the sea! the sea!"

"What of the sea?" said Sir Piers.

"You shall hear," replied Hezekiah. "I had been to a cottage close to the sea shore, to visit a pious, reverend, and dear brother, one sick of an imposthume, and very near his glory—and I had harangued him on the remedying law, or the law of grace, which hath its own special threatenings—and the new man seemed to rejoice as the old man was going out—when, lo! whilst I was yet letting my lights burn, I heard signals of distress at sea; and by and by the sounds came again, and I went to the window, and I saw——"

"Blue lights, I suppose," said Cornet Davy, who was amongst the eager listeners to this tale, "we supply the ships with them, for their cases of need in a storm. Your reverence's own lights, may be, are something of the same sort, seeing that you let them burn for souls in the last distress."

"Alas!" said Hezekiah, "I see you do not comprehend, for the darkness of your understanding: I spoke of instruction; for the commandment is a lamp, and the law is light, and the reproofs of instruction are the way of life. But let me say my say without interruption; for remember, friend, a man of understanding holdeth his peace. I looked out on the sea, and there was a mighty tempest, and a ship labouring

and giving signals of distress, as if she would make known to the land her affliction, in this her hour of visitation. And as I looked and watched from the window, I prayed she might ride out the storm better than she expected, for she seemed to be running towards the rocks; and her signals increased in number, even as her danger became more and more apparent. At one moment she looked as a dark mass on the waters; at another, she was seen dashed on the foaming tops of the waves, and again became lost to sight in the hollow of the deep seas. O! it was a sight to make sinful man pitiful and trembling for his brother! The clouds were dark as a garment of blackness; the welkin like sheeted fire; and the ocean came bounding and striving towards the shore, roaring louder than the winds."

"And the ship?" said Robina, turning pale with alarm.

"The ship was in great distress as she laboured in the trough of the sea; and was far off shore, struggling with the increasing tempest," replied Hezekiah (his eye kindling and every muscle of his countenance in action as his feelings became elevated with the interest of the scene he so forcibly described), "for the winds rose higher and higher—the winds, those restless and invisible spirits, that drive before them the swift clouds, which they curb, impel, or make to stand motionless, at their will."

"Did I not ever say he had a fine vein of poetic feeling when he could forget his formality in his subject?" whispered Agnes to Robina; "but we must cut short this tale, if any thing is to be done. Hezekiah would talk to old death as he stands at the door, and let him enter rather than give over parleying, unless you stopped him." And coming forward, she added, "What must be done? Can any help be given to the sufferers? Possibly, the vessel, like Sir Hugh Piper's Double Rose, may be drifted and wrecked on the breakers near the coast. What can be done? How long is it since you left the beach?"

"I did but look upon the ship, and came up hither as fast as my legs could carry me, to make known this case of distress to the worthy Sir Piers, whose humanity extends to the suffering on sea as well as on land."

"I fear," said Sir Piers, "little can be done: but that little we will attempt willingly. I will instantly give the necessary instructions to my people, who are ever ready for such like cases of distress; and then we will down to the shore."

"Let me go with you," said Sir Hugh.

"And me!" cried the Cornet, "I may be of use; I have seen such perils before now."

"And take your cloak, my dear father," said Agnes to Sir Hugh, who rose to prepare for his departure.

"And take your great water dog, old Orgar, with you, my dear sir," said Robina to Sir Piers.

"And ropes and torches," said Sir Hugh, "in one hand, and a bottle of brandy in the other."

"And the Bible in the other, you mean," said Hezekiah Hornbuckle.

"Every thing in its place, honest crop-ears," said Sir Hugh: "men do not preach in a tempest, to need a text from the Bible; and if a glass of brandy, and a helping hand, can save a fellow-creature after a wreck, I hold it no bad preparation for saying one's prayers."

Hezekiah groaned at what he deemed a too familiar and irreverent consideration of the Bible, but made ready as eagerly as the rest to set out, in order to accompany them to the spot whence he had witnessed the distress of the ship.

In a very few minutes Sir Piers had given all necessary directions, and returned to the watchet-chamber for Sir Hugh and his companions. The two girls hung about their fathers with a thousand caresses and adieus, and many cautions as to what they were to do, and what to avoid, lest they should fall into danger themselves. Sir Piers shook off Robina, as he said, "Away with you! I will lack no prudent caution. And do you make ready beds and warm blankets; and look out dry clothes from my wardrobe; and see fires lighted in the chambers, and all things comfortable and ready; and let there be spiced possets, and all needful, both for those who go out to help, and for those, who, I trust, may be helped in this peril, on our return."

"We will do all you order; and take care of yourselves, and God bless you, and preserve the poor mariners," were the words repeated again and again by the young ladies, as the party set out in the midst of the tempest to go towards the shore. Hezekiah lingered last, and slipping out of a side pocket in his cloak his little clasped Bible, he said to Robina, who expressed her surprise at his loitering behind his friends —"I will but try a lot, and straight go forward."

She well knew what he meant; since in her day it was a very general custom with the sectaries to "try lots," as they called it: that was, to learn the will of Providence, in respect to any important enterprise, by turning, hap hazard, to the first passage which presented itself in the Bible or the New Testament. Hezekiah did so on the present occasion, and apparently with satisfaction to himself; for opening the book at a part where he knew tolerably well he should be certain

to stumble upon something about shipwreck, in the Acts of the Apostles, his eye caught the following verse,—"Howbeit, we must be cast upon a certain island."

"That must mean," said the learned minister, "in this instance, the peninsula of Mount Edgcumbe, which most truly resembleth an island: it can be no other in this lot. I will straight down to the beach; and who knows but the wreck of bodies may turn to a saving of souls, if I am there to catch at the poor perishing sinners, and to throw them out the hope of the Word, as an anchor, against all peril. I will about the good work, and trust to my Master for the heavenly wages of the toil." And so saying, he caught up his staff, restored the little Bible to his cloak pocket, and set off with hasty strides after those who were gone on before him.

CHAPTER VI.

Wave high your torches on each crag and cliff;
Let many lights blaze on our battlements;
Shout to them in the pauses of the storm,
And tell them there is hope!

MATURIN'S *Bertram.*

THE way the party pursued from the house towards the back of Mount Edgcumbe, though then obscured by a stormy sky and the mists of a thick rain, was one, which, when seen under other circumstances, afforded scenes replete with beauty in its most varied forms. Not far distant from the mansion, after winding up the side of a hill, amidst the over-arching shadow of the woods, the wanderer in those wild haunts might enjoy a scene truly magnificent that presented itself to his view at an open space upon the summit.

Looking thence to the west, the Hamoaze appeared, with that animated character which shipping never fails to give to the waters where it is found. Beyond arose the blue and distant hills of Cornwall, extending in a line, till they might be said to become united with those of Devon by the bold eminence of Brent Tor, that stood towering above both counties, like a king who keeps in subjection the nations as they lie prostrate at his feet. In the middle distance arose the towns of Stoke, Stonehouse, and Plymouth, with its ancient castle, then in full strength and grandeur. The buildings that formed these towns were of granite and marble, such costly materials being native to the county. On a fine evening, as they stood glittering and sparkling in the sun, they presented the most brilliant appearance, characterised as they were by the uniformity of their architecture and the beauty of their situation.

Viewed from this particular spot, Plymouth Sound, with the little fortified island of St. Nicholas, or Drake's Island, was seen extended like a map, whilst beyond appeared the deep blue waters of Mill Bay, and in its immediate vicinity, to the right of the Hoe (the Hoe itself being a place so celebrated by Spenser, as to be considered classic ground), was discerned the dismally-named port of Deadman's Bay. The eye, ranging still beyond, looked on the reach, or bold sweep of the Lara flowing at the foot of Saltram woods. By a second

reach, the banks of which were studded with cottages and the little village of Oreston, the river continued its course, and disembogued itself into the Catwater, behind Mount Batten. To this scene, looking to the south, the lofty heights of Staddon formed a side-screen, whilst the view was beautifully intersected by the massive and umbrageous woods of Mount Edgcumbe in the foreground. Beyond Staddon Heights arose, surrounded by the sea, though not far distant from the land, the insulated and solitary Mewstone (probably deriving its name from the quantity of gulls or sea-mews that shelter within its hollows), a rock that looked out on the wide deep, as its waves rolled in tumult towards the shore. From the Mewstone to Penlee Point, on the opposite extremity of the scene, the eye ranged over an horizon formed by the broad and majestic expanse of the Atlantic Ocean. Such, and many such, scenes of beauty are found in the matchless peninsula of Mount Edgcumbe.

At the time Sir Piers and his little company traversed the ground in their way towards that part of the beach whence Hezekiah had descried the ship, a sky black, lowering, and surcharged with storm, gave a dark and awful character to the whole. As they passed on, it was melancholy to hear the wind howl through the old trees, that groaned as if in accompaniment to the horrors of the tempest; and to those sufferings which, on land as well as sea, are its frequent attendants.

Shocking as it may be, it is nevertheless true, that at the date of our narrative, and many years after, the shipwrecks on the western coast of Devon and Cornwall were called, by the lower orders residing near the shore, "God's gifts;" for whatever the sea sent, in its fury, towards the land, was seized, under this name, as lawful spoil; and many were the circumstances of the most inhuman barbarities committed by these desperadoes on the miserable sufferers who thus fell within their power; escaping the fury of a merciless element, to fall into the hands of human beings all as pitiless: and instances were recorded, when, in order to secure a spoil of value acquired by such means, many shipwrecked persons had actually been murdered by these hardened traffickers in misery and guilt.

It had been amongst the many meritorious exertions of Sir Piers Edgcumbe's life, that he had adopted every possible means on the coast within and near his own domain, not only to prevent these crimes, but to afford every possible assistance to the unfortunate who, in his day, from the want of a lighthouse on the Eddystone rocks, were so frequently shipwrecked either on that fatal reef or still nearer to the coast. All things necessary on such occasions were ever held in readiness, and

now had been brought out by his people on the call of humanity towards the distressed.

After some time spent in toiling up the hill against the wind and storm that blew directly in their faces, the party gained the back of the peninsula, and gradually began to descend towards the beach; passing through a little valley (in the direction of Cawsand Bay), surrounded on either side by bold and abrupt heights. A cottage stood in the bottom, about a hundred yards from the sea.* Two lofty elms, uninjured by their proximity to such a tempestuous neighbour, being so well sheltered on either side, marked the little garden of the dwelling, which stood thus embosomed in solitude and beauty. Rocks of ebon blackness skirted the shore, and the ocean rolled its majestic waves above them, bursting and breaking into sheets of foam; whilst the surrounding heights presented the wildest combinations of broken and cragged cliffs, red in colour, and here and there hung with dark pines, or with woods that grew feathering down to the very water's edge.

The party now looked with anxious eye towards the sea; but, so thick was the haze, so heavy the swell, that nothing of the ship could be seen.

At length Sir Piers expressed his determination to ascend a certain point which he well knew amid the cliffs; where, from its commanding height, he should in all probability discern the vessel, if she still lived or was drifting towards the more westerly point of the shore. In the mean time, as every instant grew more dark and hazy, he commanded torches to be lighted and carried along the coast, so as to make signals, that the ship might avoid those tremendous rocks on which she would inevitably be dashed to pieces if she came but near them.

Sir Piers himself then took a torch, and accompanied by a servant, who bore another, set off for the cliffs, leaving Hezekiah and Sir Hugh busied in directing the movements of his people on the beach. With some difficulty he drove back Orgar, the famous water-dog, that seemed bent on following his master's steps.

Sir Piers, bold in heart, quick in eye, and accustomed from a boy to scale the heights and crags of Mount Edgcumbe, before any thing like regular paths were formed to facilitate such a purpose, now ascended them, though not without considerable hazard. Several of these cliffs were also hung with tall and gloomy pines, that creaked and almost screamed as the wind assailed them on every side. Others lay torn up by the roots, shattered and overhanging some precipitous heights,

* A beautiful cottage, lately built, now stands on the same spot.

as the dizzy and uncertain track wound by the side of their abyss: sometimes a cliff appeared rising above the rolling vapours or thin clouds, that seemed to float from the sea to the shore; whilst anon the face of a giant rock, dark as the hour, would become illumined by the vivid flashes of lightning that now again began to play athwart the heavens; shewing distinctly the scathed tops of many a bald oak that had already suffered by similar shocks of the tempest.

Then followed a peal of thunder, so reverberated amid the cliffs that even the stout heart of Sir Piers was for a moment assailed by terror; he stopped and acknowledged, by a feeling of involuntary reverence and awe, the irresistible power of Him who "bowed the heavens and came down, whilst darkness was under his feet." Another peel was followed by deep silence; for the tempest seemed to pause in its fury, as the thunder rolled away among the far-extending heights. Yet the pause was momentary, for, the storm rising again, the roar of ocean was heard contending with that of the winds, which rushed in furious gusts amid the hollows and the rocks. The red flame of the torches cast an unearthly hue on the sides of the dark cliffs, as Sir Piers now struggled forward, resolute to gain that point whence he might command the whole extent of sea beyond the mouth of the harbour, and, should the vessel yet live, hold out the signal which he had prepared for her guidance.

After incessant toil and difficulty, that no person but one perfectly well acquainted with the track could have undertaken with any probability of success, Sir Piers at length gained a bold eminence that stood out from amid the wooded cliffs. Lower down, and at its base, lay reefs of rock; where, on the very verge of many a point, started up more than one aged pine that had defied alike storms and winds, though not without signs of the elemental contest, for above a century. Beyond was stretched out the main ocean; the spray of whose billows, as they burst with fury against the shore, dashed itself nearly as high as the lofty eminence on which Sir Piers was now stationed, commanding at one view the whole expanse of the sea from the Mewstone to Penlee Point, and within the range of which, on a clear day, was seen the Eddystone. Sir Piers, as he thus stood, holding fast by a pine with one hand, whilst the torch was extended in the other, distinctly perceived, drifting towards the shore, what at first appeared a dark speck on the agitated waters. As he attentively looked upon this object, he became convinced that it was a boat driving on to the beach, and apparently governed by no power but that of the winds and waves. The sea, to use an

old phrase, ran "mountains high;" at one moment raising the boat on their curling tops, and at the next burying her within the hollow of the waves, as if she would never rise again.

In this manner Sir Piers perceived her rapidly driving before the wind towards that part of the beach where he had left Sir Hugh Piper and Hezekiah. There could be no doubt she must be upset in the surf that broke with such fury on the shore; and, should such a mischance befall near the reef of rocks, not a soul within her could be saved!

No doubt the same conviction was felt by the party on the beach, for, though it was impossible they could be of the least assistance to the boat, as it came rolling onward with every wave, yet Sir Piers saw them running, by a natural impulse, towards that part of the shore where there was less hazard from the rocks than in the station they had just quitted, and where it might be truly designated as iron-bound and fatal to the mariner.

Sir Piers looked again, on turning an angle of the cliffs, and now perceived his people collected together as near as possible to the raging sea, so as to give aid, if it might be practicable, and yet to preserve themselves from being washed away by the retiring billows. He saw a wave carry the boat within a few yards of the shore. Her fate was no longer doubtful; the only remaining hope was with God, that he would give strength to the poor wretches within her to combat the surf, and enable Sir Piers' people to rush forward with safety to their assistance. Sir Piers staid to see no more, but in all haste hurried from his lofty stand, and made his way towards the beach. In his retreat the wind, which had before been directly in his face, was now at his back, so that he returned in less than half the time he had employed in gaining the cliffs.

When Sir Piers reached the shore, the first thing he saw was his own people carrying along two bodies, which, no doubt, they had rescued from the all-devouring sea: if dead or alive he did not know. It seemed to him, even before he could join them to learn the particulars, that Orgar had borne some part in the work of deliverance; for the dog, as they carried along the foremost body, kept close beside it, wagging his tail and looking up wistfully, as if he felt an interest in the apparently lifeless being thus transported from the shore.

The inquiries of Sir Piers were speedily satisfied; and he did not pause to enter into more minute particulars. The younger man, who it seemed had been either too feeble or too amazed to do much for himself, must have perished, but for the bold exertions of the minister, Hornbuckle, and the Cornet

Davy, assisted by one of the men, who, at the hazard of their own lives, had contrived to rush forth, and to throw him a rope, which he caught at the very moment when the boat was dashed forward and upset close in-shore. But even then he was too feeble to profit, as fully as might have been expected, by this assistance; and would have perished in the surf by the force of the retiring wave, had not Orgar lent his aid, and held him fast by the collar of his doublet, tugging and dragging him along with all the energy which the noble animal was proud to display in the service of man.

The other person, though considerably older, had in a great degree effected his own escape by extraordinary efforts at self-preservation. Like Robinson Crusoe, he had been repeatedly washed on shore and carried back again by the waves, as he combated them with the strength and address of the most able swimmer; and, like that adventurer, he had also at last been cast on shore, though not ultimately with the same good fortune. The last wave threw him with so much fury on a rock that shewed its bare top above the flowing waters, that he received a blow so violent on the head and chest, as to deprive him of all sense and motion. He lay like one devoid of life upon the rock; and there he would have perished, but for the humane exertions of the men on the beach, who, at no small risk, brought him from his dangerous situation.

The younger man had fainted; probably from cold and exhaustion (for he had received no severe blows), soon after Orgar had so ably rendered his assistance in dragging him beyond the reach of the surf.

Sir Piers, without pausing, as no further assistance could be given, for the rest of the luckless voyagers had inevitably perished on the upset of the boat, now ordered his people to carry the rescued persons, as fast as they could convey such burthens, to the house, where every possible help might be afforded, without delay, that their unfortunate state required. These orders were instantly obeyed, and it was with a feeling of great delight that Sir Piers, as he quitted the beach, saw a vessel (that very vessel, the Virginia, which, escaping the Eddystone herself, had heard the death-cry of the crew of the Old James, and whose signals had first given the alarm to Hezekiah) drift before the wind into a safe anchorage in Cawsand Bay.

Sir Piers, with his friends and followers, soon reached the house; for their humanity prompted their speed; and every known means being used to restore animation, the two unfortunate persons for whose benefit they were employed rewarded their generous assistants by shewing signs of life. In half an hour they were perfectly restored to animation.

The younger man appeared only weak and feeble from his late sufferings; but the elder was in a state of so much danger from the contusions he had received on his head and chest, that it was deemed advisable to call in a surgeon. Sir Piers despatched a servant to procure such assistance, and, in the interval, both the shipwrecked persons were put to bed, with all care. But little converse past; for the young man was too weak to do more than thank his deliverers in a few words; and the other was too ill and too suffering to do even that.

Sir Piers saw all done that humanity required at his hands; and having seen the strangers deposited in bed for the night, he next turned his thoughts to his friends and followers: these were relieved by dry clothes and sack-possets, and soon lost all sense of their late toils in the sound sleep that was their consequence. Sir Piers had now nothing left to do but to go to bed himself; but this he could not think of till one more friend, and that, though the last, not the least, was taken care of,—Orgar, the water dog; whom, with his own hands, he that night fed with the remains of a stewed capon from his own table; and, having patted and caressed him with many kind and encouraging words, did not chide him back, as the dog rose to follow his master in his retreat, but suffered him to sleep on the red velvet cushion of the great chair, in Sir Piers' own chamber. There both dog and master slept as sound as such worthies deserved to do, after a day spent in acts of so much humanity and exertion.

CHAPTER VII.

She said, and raised her skinny hand,
As in defiance to high Heaven,
And stretch'd her long lean finger forth,
And spake aloud the words of power.
SOUTHEY'S *Thalaba*, book ii.

No one who had seen the evening of that day whose busy events have supplied us with matter for the foregoing chapters, would have conjectured with how different an aspect the sun, at his next rising, would look upon the world. The wind had fallen during the night; the rain had ceased, and the very violence of the storm seemed to have occasioned its dispersion.

It was indeed surprising, at early dawn, to witness the change that had taken place—a change such as few persons not resident in the west of England are at all accustomed to see; where rain and sunshine succeed each other, often unexpectedly, and with little or no apparent cause. The fatigue, anxiety, and alarm experienced by the family and guests at Mount Edgcumbe, made all, except those appointed to watch the bed of the wounded stranger, sleep heavily and soundly throughout the house.

One inmate, however, must be excepted; and that was the pretty mistress Agnes Piper; whose lively imagination, and fondness for indulging her own poetic vein in solitary rambles, made her, like every true daughter of genius, who is unsophisticated by the habits of a town life, an early riser. On the present occasion, Agnes was more early than usual; for, not having slept so well as the rest, and thinking of all the distressing events related to her of the boat and the storm on the previous evening, she had lain awake in bed, forming the pictures of her fancy into rhyme, and thought she might as well go and observe how the ocean looked after the late tempest; and up she started with the thought, dressed herself with all speed, and without staying to disturb her companion, Robina, she determined to sally out, with the purpose of visiting the very spot where she had heard the poor man was thrown upon the rocks, and rescued, on the previous night.

Agnes was subject to such flights of an ungoverned fancy; for she had been from her infancy, an indulged—and, but for the natural sweetness of her temper, would inevitably have

become a spoilt—child, in the fullest sense of the word. As it was, she was headstrong, did things by impulse, and seldom consulted advice till she had made up her mind. Yet, with all these faults, for we like her too well to under-rate her, it must be acknowledged she had many excellent qualities—a warm heart, the most unwearied good-nature, high principles, and, as the sheet-anchor of all her perfections, a deep, sincere, and practical reverence for the word of God.

Agnes sallied forth, and commenced her ramble amid the varied beauties of Mount Edgcumbe; now pausing to contemplate them, and again renewing slowly her walk, as images of poetry, derived from nature, suggested themselves to her mind.

A thousand birds sprang from their covert, and warbled in the wildest melody their notes of welcome to the early day, whilst others sat chirping, and pruning their plumage on the boughs of a sweet-scented thorn or an antique elm; and the fall of many a little rivulet and stream murmured musically in concert to the feathered tribes of air, whilst every delicate herb or flower amid the grass, sparkled with dew as if some fairy spirit of the hour had hung sportively a jewel on each opening bell.

Though all these circumstances of nature highly charmed Agnes in her morning walk, she rambled down to the sea beach, and there looked with a fearful interest on that dread ocean, which, though the storm was past, had not yet settled itself into tranquillity, but still rolled its multitudinous billows with a heavy swell towards the shore. She saw and felt its grandeur; after a while she thought that, as she returned to the house, she would pass by a favourite spot which was, on more accounts than one, somewhat noted at the date of our narrative. Thither Agnes bent her steps; and thither must we bear her company.

The spot she so much admired was one, indeed, replete with beauty. Within a little lonely dell there stood a cottage, thatched, and covered with many a wild rose, and honeysuckle, that grew so thickly as to encroach even upon the latticed windows, and somewhat to obscure their light. It stood sheltered from the rude breath of the wind, or the too ardent gaze of the sun, by some venerable and spreading oaks growing close to the house and within the little garden, that was surrounded in part by a quickset hedge; where, in due season, there appeared a gay display of roses, pinks and gillyflowers.

Apart from the cottage, yet being also sheltered by high trees, with a thicket behind them, was found that which gave

celebrity to the spot, THE HOLY WELL. But though so called, it was a clear still pool, whose source was in the earth, whence it sprang; and finding its way through a narrow outlet at some little distance from the dark silent pool, it assumed another character, and trickled down the side of a bank, losing itself in the valley, that was ever verdant from its refreshing streams.

By those acquainted with the superstitions of the west, it will be remembered, that the Pixy race, having their origin with the fairies of the Saxon times, are still held as the guardians of all wells and fountains, whose wondrous powers, we have been informed, are to this day held infallible by the peasantry, in some parts of Devon and Cornwall. At the date of our narrative, the practice also of witchcraft—even now holding sway in the west—was likewise credited, not merely by the vulgar, but by the educated, and above all, by the godly.

At that time seldom was there a holy or wonder-working well, but it was under the immediate superintendence of one of these priestesses of Beelzebub, who were resorted to, as interpreters of the oracular powers of the well. Many a cunning old woman made this office the means of her support; and as the credulous and superstitious love not to lose the opportunity of gratifying their favourite propensities, these old sibyls, who sometimes did their customers the kindness to terrify them out of their wits in return for their money, were always winked at, and seldom informed against, notwithstanding the desire of the Parliament

"To find revolted witches out."

The holy well within the precincts of Mount Edgcumbe could boast such a priestess; and though we cannot say Dame Gee (for such was her name) was a favourite with Sir Piers, yet her having lived some thirty years before, as a waiting-maid with his grandmother, her being an excellent village doctress, both for man and beast, and being possessed of shrewd sense, apt and forcible expressions in her discourse, and a good deal of cunning (so that she put the best face on things before Sir Piers), altogether procured from him the indulgence of her being allowed to live within the beautiful little cottage we have described; certainly no suitable habitation for "a hag with age grown double," such as every witch ought to be, to accord with the character of her profession. Another circumstance, also, may help to account for this indulgence towards her on the part of Sir Piers: she had assuredly once cured him of a most dangerous inflammation of the eyes by a preparation of herbs, to whose merits alone, he like a man of sense, ascribed

the cure; though the country people insisted it arose from the charm pronounced over the decoction.

As Agnes approached the holy well, she paused a moment to look upon Dame Gee, who literally bent over it like an ancient sibyl, her thin grey locks straying from under a coif covered by a high-crowned hat, such as would have suited Mother Shipton, that queen of witches, who is said to have attracted the notice of so many wise fools in the reign of King Henry VIII. Dame Gee was a person not to be held in contempt, if but half the things reported of her were true. The following sketch of one incident of her life, we give as it has been handed down to posterity by those elders who love to tell such tales over a Christmas fire.

Dame Gee had an only son, a fair and promising youth, being in all things very unlike Caliban, the offspring of the hag Sycorax. This boy quarreled with one of his companions, a lad about his own age, whose mother interfered; and thinking Dame Gee's darling teased her own, she struck him, and sent him crying home. The witch, enraged by this blow bestowed on her son, determined on a bitter revenge; and having consulted the dark power of evil, she is said to have drawn a circle, near the cottage of her offending neighbour, with such potent and such hellish arts, that on any person stepping within it, he would instantly become an idiot, full of spite and mischief.

Dame Gee so contrived the accomplishment of her charmed circle, that it might be ready to entrap her hated neighbour's child as he returned home from school. But who shall speak the fury and the punishment of the witch, when, by some unforeseen casualty, the first person who stepped within the accursed ring was her own son! From that hour he became almost less than human; a thing of "mops and mows;" ugly in body, miserable in mind, and terrible to all about him: but to none so shocking as to his incensed mother, to whom the very sight of the boy added gall to bitterness. From that time forward Dame Gee is said to have become the most cruel, unrelenting, yet cunning of her tribe, doing evil by means less open, yet more deadly in their secret effects. So went the tale; it was generally believed at the time, nor is it to this day wholly discredited even by posterity, as they turn pale at the relation of a deed so full of horror.

Agnes had heard this story; and to one of her turn of mind, though full of terror, there was something of a deep, dread interest attached to the character of Dame Gee, that excited her imagination. She had seen the idiot boy, yet she doubted if she ought to believe, or disbelieve, the story of his mother's

cruelty having reduced him to such a pass; as in her village kindness amongst the poor, Agnes had often heard of the excellent nursing, and the wonderful cures performed by this woman, in cases where the doctors had wholly failed; and she also knew that even Sir Piers himself had no objection to wink at her being called in to try what she could do when the more regular practitioners were at fault. The well, too, and the old woman's powers in expounding its fearful signs, were things remembered, and, if not wholly credited, were at least not positively rejected, and always spoken of with awe by the lively and enthusiastic Agnes.

As she now, therefore, saw the ancient sibyl bending over the dread pool, she felt like one who fears, yet who expects, and almost hopes, to have her imagination gratified by some supernatural sign or wonder, yet without exactly knowing what to expect or what to desire might appear. She advanced, however, towards the well; and as the old woman looked upon her young visitant drawing near, Agnes had a full view of her dark and ill-omened countenance, whose expression was at once indicative of sense and cunning; and, even in its most composed state, had a quick or haughty glance at command, with a supercilious air, that seemed to declare to every one with whom she spoke how much she was their superior in the proud possession of supernatural powers.

"Good day, Dame," said Agnes; "you are busy at the well, I see, this morning: have any of the villagers been to consult you, or to learn who stole a horn spoon?" she added, endeavouring to talk cheerfully to the old woman, and as if she was not afraid of her. "These, and a thousand more inquiries, people say you can determine by the bubbles the water makes in answer to your questions."

"You would seem to doubt, young lady," said Dame Gee, "the truth of these things; but your belief in the powers of the well is too firm to be shaken by doubts, though a priest should start them. For once, however, you are mistaken; no villager has made token by the holy well this morning. I came, as you see, to dip this pitcher of water for a special purpose: at cock-crow this day, the surly old groom, Ralph, brought me a message from the housekeeper at Mount Edgcumbe."

"Indeed!" said Agnes; "I left the house to take an early walk down to the beach to see how the ocean looked after the storm; and, as I thought, I left my chamber before the housekeeper was stirring."

"She has not been in bed all night; so Ralph said," replied Dame Gee; "for one of the men, whom, it seems, Sir Piers

saved from death on the sea, is like enough to find it on land. He is dangerously hurt, and I am sent for privately, by the old housekeeper, to come up, and try a charm upon him this morning."

"Nay, now, good dame, try something better than that," said Agnes; "I should have more faith in one of your herb plasters for a hurt, or a mess of featherfew to compose him to sleep."

The witch answered the first part of this bold speech with a scowl not at all pleasant to Agnes, who feared she might have said too much.

"What! lady," exclaimed Dame Gee, "do you scoff at my art? whilst at the very moment you do so, you are burning with curiosity to call upon it for your own service? I know where your thoughts are; and that you would learn tidings of the absent. Wherefore not say so at once, when there is none to hear you, but her who could satisfy your desires? Away with this! there needs no masking with me. Do not I know, that whilst you lived for two years with your grandam at Exeter there were fine doings, unknown to your father?"

Agnes was perfectly confounded: she had not a word to answer; for she was conscience struck; she turned pale, but had not presence of mind enough to know what to say.

Dame Gee saw her confusion. "Come," she said, "young lady, I will spare you pain: I will do your bidding without waiting your commands. Do you stand there, and be silent; and when I wave this ashen bough thrice" (she took up a short staff, or wand, that lay beside the pitcher she had been filling), "ay, thrice over the well, the spirit of the spring shall make known his answer. Look on this dark pool! It is black, yet clear as the chamber mirror that reflects your beauty. Look into it!"

Agnes did so, and saw with surprise how well it would have served her as a glass, did she need one, to bind up her flowing locks.

"It is a deep and fearful pool," said Dame Gee; "for truth lies within it; and makes known the hidden secrets of things to those who desire to lift the veil. Mark me, maiden! If the man or woman inquired after by me, as I stand thus and make sign, be well, the water will instantly bubble up; if sick, it changes colour fast as an evening cloud; but if dead, there comes no change. Dost thou mark me?"

"I do," said Agnes, as her heart beat quick, and in spite of herself she became nearly overpowered by the terrors in part excited by the demeanour of the witch, and in part by the vivacity of her own imagination.

"Place a silver tester, if thou hast one, on yonder dark stone by the water's brink," said the hag; "it is the token to the spirit: it must be silver."

Agnes, trembling, obeyed.

"Now stand up, and fear not," continued Dame Gee: "thou art not the first maiden whom I have seen look like the sheeted dead, as she has paused on the brink of this holy well. Not long since, there came to me one who was a wife; who would know if her husband, then in durance to the Parliament, for he was a sequestered churchman, might be alive or dead. I saw her eager eye, her breathless anxiety, as I called his name. The water made no change; but when I looked on her again, she was changed, and fearfully. Black confusion was in her mind; anguish and the bitter passion of speechless woe. She went home, when straight came the tidings that her husband had been murdered! The widow lives; but so lives that not an hour passes but she thinks death comes but slow to her, though he came so fast to him whom she laments. Now shall the pool speak of thy fortunes and thy friend."

"I will not look on it," exclaimed Agnes, in a tone of horror; "I dare not."

"Nay, you must not flinch," said the hag, who seemed to delight in the terrors she had excited in the mind of the young lady. "You shall look on it;" and seizing Agnes by the arm, she said, as she held her fast, "Be silent; speak not till I have made the sign! Now tell me, Spirit of the Waters, and tell me true, if Reginald Elford yet lives or not:—

In health or in wealth,
In weal or in woe,
If dead or alive, tell me so!

Thrice the hag waved her wand; and looking herself upon the well, at the moment she made the terrified Agnes do so likewise, she uttered an exclamation of surprise. Agnes screamed; and Dame Gee was astonished at her own work, like one of those wizards who may be supposed to feel surprised by the actual appearance of the devil, whilst only pretending to raise him up; for what could equal her astonishment, or the affright of Agnes, when they beheld a human head, wearing a large slouched hat, reflected distinctly in the dark pool; the appearance being immediately followed by a young man catching Agnes in his arms as, from terror, she was falling to the earth.

CHAPTER VIII.

Farewell! God knows when we shall meet again;
I have a faint cold fear thrills through my veins
That almost freezes up the heat of life.

SHAKSPEARE.

"GRACIOUS heaven! whence come you?" inquired Agnes.

"From the thicket hard by. I saw you as I was advancing under cover of the trees; I heard my name called, and suddenly coming forward, I——"

Agnes scarcely heard him, and looked as if about to lose all consciousness of his presence, or of her late alarm. He held her up; as Dame Gee, who seemed to enjoy the scene of terror her own arts had helped to bring about, lifted up the pitcher and threw some water in the young lady's face. The sudden chill prevented her fainting away; but she trembled as she could no longer stand; and the intruder helped her to a large stone that afforded her a seat near the well. He then placed himself beside her, and paid her all those little soothing attentions that he thought might restore her spirits and dispel her agitation; as Dame Gee officiously chafed her temples, and her hands, that were as cold as death. And though it was most likely that, at such a moment, nothing was so much desired as her absence, yet, nevertheless, under pretext of giving aid to Agnes, lest she should faint again, she seemed resolved to stay where she was, for no other purpose than that of tormenting.

Agnes spoke only a few broken sentences; but the young man, who was well looking, and though poorly dressed had that appearance which ever distinguishes a gentleman, observed great caution in what he said, and seemed vexed that in the surprise of the moment he had acknowledged his name to be Elford before Dame Gee. In the hope, however, that she might not have remarked it, he now made an attempt to mislead her, whilst he addressed some words of common courtesy to Agnes; but more in the manner of a stranger than in that of a familiar friend. Suddenly, however, he stopped, hesitated, was confused, and seemed to know not what to say next.

could not do this violence to a daughter's feelings, however little he might regard mine."

"Not with the intent to injure either of us, believe me," said Agnes: "but, oh! Elford, you do not know my father. There lives not, it is true, a kinder heart, or a more generous mind; yet one thing he has even stronger than these—honour; and to sanction your affection for me contrary to the will of Sir Marmaduke Elford, he would deem an act of such dishonour, that on no consideration would he be brought to listen to it. He never will sanction your affection till it is confirmed by your father's approval of your choice."

"Alas! Agnes," said young Elford, "do not speak of my father: he is in no condition to be asked for such consent; and I am in none to seek you as a wife. No, Agnes," he continued, as he started up and paced distractedly by the side of the well, "I cannot, I must not, I ought not, to seek your hand—we are beggared—all, all is lost—a price set on my dear father's head! Whilst he has no place in which to hide it, saving by the mercy, the charity, of some friend, who, at his own peril, may venture to give him shelter—whilst with agony unutterable I speak it, his many hardships, his disgraces, his long-suffering and sorrows have awakened in him some touch of that dreadful malady to which the hag but now alluded. He has escaped the care of his son, who now seeks him sorrowing, yet uncertain where to find him. It is said he is concealed in this neighbourhood—to seek him is my principal motive for being here; yet not the only one. There is a matter of deep import—but I will not speak of it. Rather let me hail these moments that I share with you; yet I confess, Agnes, it was not to seek you that I came this morning to Mount Edgcumbe."

"What brought you then?" said Agnes.

"Do not ask," replied Reginald: "if it concerned myself alone, be assured you should know it; but a life of more worth than a thousand such as mine; an interest vital in itself, and sacred to my best feelings, puts a seal upon my lips even to you. Rest satisfied there is nothing which Reginald Elford calls his, but you may command. His honour is not his alone—since it belongs to his father, to his country; never to be betrayed lost but with life—honour keeps me silent, Agnes; ask me nothing."

"I will ask nothing," replied Agnes; "yet I would you could see my father. You look so distressed, so ill; it breaks my heart to see you. You have never met my father, for he never came to Exeter whilst I lived under the roof of old Lady Parr. I would you could see him."

"I must not now, Agnes," replied Elford; "for he, as your father, would have a right to question me concerning mine—and I could not answer him; I could not, Agnes," he added, in a voice that expressed the bitterest feelings, "I could not find courage to tell him that after having won his daughter's affections without his leave, I fear I must resign her for ever."

"Oh! say not so," cried Agnes, as the tears she took no pains to hide fast trickled down her cheeks. "Do not go from me; time is always passing on, and things may change. You are, you say, ruined in fortune, and your father also: surely that circumstance will conquer his pride and his objections; and if our fortune should improve in the world, we may do you service. My father never saw you, but he knows your character, and respects it, and never had any objection to our engagement, but that he thought honour demanded he should not sanction it till Sir Marmaduke, more nobly born, and of higher degree than himself, first gave consent to it. Stay, and see what time may do for us."

"For me, Agnes, I fear it can do nothing. I have lost all in these wars but my honour, and my life. I could not be the villain, even if my father were sufficiently himself to yield his consent to my wishes, to make you, tenderly nurtured and bred, the sharer of my misery—poor, exiled, my life held forfeited by those who now cut off whomsoever they proscribe as obnoxious to their measures. Thus circumstanced, what a lot should I have to offer to the woman I most love? No, Agnes; once let me but rescue my father, let me but see him in safety, and the beggared Elford, with nothing left but his sword and a broken heart, must seek some employ in a foreign land. No matter how brief may be his date of life, when he has lived to see his dearest hopes die before him."

"Do not talk thus," said Agnes, all her enthusiasm returning at the sight of his distress. "Do not think so meanly of me. I gave you the most solemn pledge of faith and truth, when you were far above me in fortune; and do you think I would now desert you, now when you are poorer than myself? No! Elford, I will not recall my vow, though circumstances may for ever forbid its fulfilment. Whilst I live, it is for you, and for my father."

"The very gentleness, the very affection that would brave all evils for my sake," said Elford, "ought to teach me not to take advantage of it, not to betray it. Oh! Agnes, had I but a hope left to give you comfort, you know not with how much joy I could embrace it; but there is a cause, a fatal cause. I must not injure you so much as to—I will not risk your safety. I speak darkly, I know I do; yet I must not speak more

plainly. I am care-worn and broken-hearted, and quite unfit to name as gently as I would do a subject so painful to a being, kind, good, and tender like yourself.—Agnes, forget me; forget one whose path leads to toils, to danger, perhaps to death: and no matter how soon it comes, when he shall have spoken to thee that last bitter word—farewell!"

Agnes could no longer suppress her feelings; her imagination pictured to her a thousand terrors, a thousand fearful circumstances, suggested by those dark hints which Elford had so mysteriously thrown out; and unaccustomed as she was to control any strong impulse of her mind, she cried aloud, in the bitterness of her heart, "Danger or death I care not; both would be welcome, so we may not for ever part—and to part thus!"

Her tears continued to flow, as Reginald Elford endeavoured to calm and soothe her feelings; till softened by such unaffected expressions of her constancy and affection, the high spirit of honour which had dictated to his mind that he ought to leave her free, and even resign her for ever, rather than involve her in those perils with which he was surrounded, was fearfully shaken; and after having in vain attempted to recall his expiring purpose, he ended by receiving and giving, with fond delight, every renewed promise of fidelity and affection; referring all the rest to time and chance, those most uncertain of all friends, to whom lovers in extremity are apt to trust, as drowning men catch at straws for safety.

Time flew on, the sun rose higher and higher, and the morning was advanced before Agnes remembered how long she had been seated by the side of the holy well; nor is it likely the discourse would even then have terminated, had not her ear been suddenly assailed by hearing her name called aloud in the neighbouring wood. Agnes started up. "I am called," she exclaimed, "my father has sent some one out to seek me. Adieu! Reginald—be prudent, be happy, avoid all unnecessary danger; and remember, though our vows are plighted, our hands never must be joined till Sir Marmaduke Elford and my dear father sanction our choice. Adieu! Adieu!"

And with this last feeble attempt to preserve unbroken the obedience due to her parent, Agnes set off to join those who were sent to seek her. She left Elford distressed by many and complicated causes of anxiety, the most urgent of which he had not mentioned to her, from a sense of honour, which forbade him to reveal, even to the woman he loved, a confidence the most sacred that had ever been committed to his keeping.

CHAPTER IX.

———appearances deceive;
And this one maxim is a standing rule,
Men are not what they seem.

HAVARD'S *Scanderbeg*.

IT appeared as if this morning had been predestined to be full of trials and emotions to poor Agnes; for another, and scarcely a less agitating scene, awaited her on her return to the house. On entering the parlour where the family partook of their morning meal, the signs of universal disturbance and anxiety were apparent; and her father, contrary to his usual manner, even when she had most offended, spoke to her snappishly, on the subject of her early rambles and long stay in the grounds. It was evident something had occurred to disturb the equanimity of the whole party.

Near the breakfast table sat Sir Piers Edgcumbe; a packet of papers was before him; an open letter in his hand, which he read again and again, refolded, and at length carefully put into his pocket, observing the most profound silence, whilst every line of his intelligent countenance expressed a thoughtful, almost a solemn, mood; and there was, now and then, a little irritability of manner about him, that shewed itself, notwithstanding the efforts he made to conceal his vexation; for on tasting the eggs and muscadine set before him, in order to finish his repast, he pshawed and pished in a way Agnes had never before observed in him, whose equal temper was not usually moved to pettishness by any such trifle as a breakfast not exactly to his relish. And what was more remarkable, he suffered Orgar to sit with his two fore-legs erect looking him stedfastly in the face, and every now and then giving an impatient whine to attract attention, without the least regard being paid to these intimations of so old and faithful a servant; till, by reiterated complaints, Orgar obtained, though carelessly bestowed, a slice from the chine of beef that stood in the middle of the board, as the solid foundation of the meal.

Sir Hugh Piper paced up and down the room, his right hand in the pocket of his hose, and holding in the other that long tube, in whose fumes, and the exercise of inhaling and exhaling them, he found a certain resource on all occasions of

emotion; for if overjoyed, he took a pipe to sober his raptures; if held in suspense, or doubt, he was wont to say it passed away the hours till he knew the worst, or the best, of what was coming; and if vexed or disappointed, he held there was no philosophy like that of smoking Barbadoes tobacco. Sir Hugh Piper certainly looked serious, even after his daughter had entered the room, and the little scolding was over; and Cornet Davy, whose manners and countenance were ever in exact conformity with those of his master, sat in the chimney-corner, looking grave for company.

Agnes felt uneasy, and sat down in silence; and in order to be busied in doing something, to relieve herself from that painful sensation of sitting still, and fearing to meet the eye of others (a fear which most young people experience when they have been engaged in what they feel to be wrong, and dread to have known), she helped herself to some of the good things that were upon the table, though she had no relish for them; as it may well be supposed, her recent distress of mind had prevented the beneficial effects of the morning air.

Friends, when suffering under painful circumstances which they wish to conceal from each other, feel silence to be awkward and embarrassing; and so was it at this moment: every body, perhaps, longed for relief, yet no one had the courage to speak; till the door opened, and Robina Edgcumbe appeared. In a moment her quick eye and shrewd glance perceived the unusual gloom that reigned around; and looking on her friends with surprise, she said, "Why, what ails you all? what has happened? No new calamity I hope; you all look as solemn and are as dumb as a set of quakers, or as some tinkering preacher, who fancies himself under inspiration, before the opening of a sermon. Nay, my dearest father, my dear Sir Hugh, do let me see one of you smile, if it were only out of opposition to the puritans, who think godliness must be graced by sour looks."

"We have no cause to smile this morning, my dear Robina," said Sir Piers. "I have received letters from some friends, respecting an affair we have at heart, that have something vexed me. Besides which, we have, I fear, a dying man in the house."

"And a living one," said Sir Hugh, who stopped short in his walk up the room, and intermitted the exercise of his pipe; "and a living one, who, I think, from a word or two that has been dropped, would be much better out of it."

"Hush!" said Sir Piers; "he is up; I have sent to bid him to breakfast; and, I think, I hear him coming."

It was even so; for the door again opened, and a young

man entered the apartment. The clothes he wore did not fit him, for they belonged to Sir Piers; they did not, therefore, shew his person to advantage; nevertheless, it was apparent that he was well-formed, and of superior mien. The features of his face were handsome, though an air of deep thoughtfulness, almost of melancholy, added, in appearance, four or five years at least to his age. His complexion, naturally fair, looked wan and sickly; and it was evident, that he still felt feeble and suffering from the hardships he had experienced on the previous night. In his countenance there was none of the animation of youth, none of that buoyancy of spirit which creates hopes out of desires, and expectations as soon as these are formed. Yet in his dark eye, full and lucid, there was what, indeed, is seldom seen in dark eyes, a character of peculiar sweetness that more than counterbalanced the want of the usual vivacity found in those, who, like himself, were young and handsome.

As this gentleman entered the room, Sir Piers rose and saluted him: he bowed in return, and looking round to notice in a respectful manner the rest of the company, his eye caught a view of Mistress Agnes Piper: no sooner had he seen her, than his pallid cheek became still more so, whilst hers, on the contrary, was dyed of the deepest crimson. A slight bow, and a confused expression of recognition, passed between them; as Sir Hugh, who observed it, said, in his abrupt manner, to his daughter, "It should seem, Agnes, that you know this young gentleman; but there needs not to blush about it, I trow."

Mistress Agnes said, she had frequently seen the young gentleman whilst she resided with Lady Parr, her maternal grandmother, at Exeter; "indeed, he often visited at her house."

"Thou hadst many acquaintances there, Agnes, that I knew little about, I take it," said Sir Hugh, without any particular meaning in the remark, though the conscience of Agnes gave it one that sent yet a deeper crimson to her cheek. "That old grandmother of thine," continued Sir Hugh (who was very apt to give vent to his thoughts, without considering if his doing so in company was at all times quite correct or prudent), "that Lady Parr, I say, loved the young sparks something too well, and liked to see the house full of them. For myself, I was never much disposed for a daughter of mine living with her; but Dame Piper thought it would be a good thing, and that out of sight out of mind was likely enough to happen when a will might be making; and so Agnes was allowed to be with her for a couple of years; and whilst

she was at Exeter, there came, I believe, half the young fellows in the county, dangling about her, just as moths buzz about a light; there were too many of them, by far too many —enough to turn a girl's head; but old Lady Parr liked to see her chairs and settles filled by a set of insignificant gallants, with their clinquant hose and their lace bands, and to see them prune themselves, and make their legs, in her presence, like a set of jays or monkeys."

Sir Piers Edgcumbe, who saw how exceedingly painful this thoughtless speech of Sir Hugh was to Mistress Agnes, turned it off as fast as he could, by adverting to another subject; and asked the young gentleman how he did, hoping that he found himself as well as could be expected after his late perils and providential escape.

The young man answered these inquiries with the utmost propriety and gentleness of manner; thanked his deliverers in the most grateful and warm terms; and, in fact, left nothing unsaid that ought to be said on such an occasion.

These kind thanks and inquiries made and answered, Sir Piers next expressed his concern for the state of the other person who had been saved from shipwreck, and asked how he did. To this the young gentleman replied, "I fear he is in much danger. During the night, I understand, he has not slept; and shewed many symptoms of delirium, talking confusedly, and fancying himself, at times, at sea. This morning, however, he seems to have lucid intervals; for he knew me when I went to him, and asked when the Doctor would return."

"And when will he return?" inquired Sir Piers, looking at Robina as he spoke.

"I fear not till late in the evening," she replied; "for, on quitting the house last night, Doctor Hartshorn told me he was obliged to ride many miles to visit a patient, not so sick as the poor stranger, but one who was a person of importance in the country."

"Pshaw!" said Sir Hugh; "that man who is most sick ought to be of most importance to the doctor; he ought to have seen him again this morning."

"So thought the good housekeeper, it seems, your honour," said the Cornet, "for she told me herself that owing to his absence, and her own alarm, she had sent for an old woman, held to have a curious hand in treating diseases or hurts, to see him."

"An old woman!" said Sir Hugh; "what old woman?"

"I will vouch for it she has sent for that old witch, Dame Gee," said Robina, "by whom, if ill looks could frighten away

a disease as hers do young children, the cure would soon be effected. What think you, my dear father, of this, if it be Dame Gee that the housekeeper has sent for? Shall I go and inquire?"

"I think," replied Sir Piers, "that Dame Gee is an excellent nurse, and a bad-tempered woman. That she has some powerful remedies decocted from simples and herbs, I can myself attest, having experienced their efficacy in my own person. She has had also more education than falls to the lot of many in her sphere: this, united to her shrewd sense, ill-humour, and a love, as I think, of playing on the credulity of the vulgar, in order to gain greater credit that she may really do them good, have obtained for this singular woman the character of a witch The people also tell strange tales about her playing tricks at the holy well; but I will warrant she never yet raised the devil there, nor could shew his face, if he came up, in the surface of the water."

This was another random shaft, that hit where no aim was taken: it sadly distressed Agnes: and her observant friend Robina, who without knowing what had chanced, saw she was embarrassed, now came to her assistance, but without guessing in what quarter it was most needed to ward off the blow.

"We will not waste time," she said, "in talking about Dame Gee; we all know her to be the best nurse in the country. Her stay here, therefore, at such a moment, will be useful; but I will tell you what I think ought to be done. The unfortunate man, who is so much hurt, and has been delirious all night, ought to be bled; for Doctor Hartshorn told me so last night, before he went away. 'If the patient,' said the Doctor, in his formal way, 'is not very much better, after the sedative potion I have just given him, in the morning let him be bled before the turn of the tide; and then give him a small quantity of extract of pearl in a stoup of compound waters.' And when I said, Doctor, who is to bleed him, if you are away? what shall we do in such a case? he answered, 'Send for Trim Foretop, the bone-setter and barber surgeon; for he can bleed man or horse as well as any one in the country.'"

"By all means," said Sir Piers; "let somebody go instantly for Trim Foretop; I know him well, he is a very honest man, and one who has kept my hair and beard in order these ten years. Let him be sought for."

"Please your honour, and Sir Hugh," said Cornet Davy, rising and bowing respectfully to his master, "I will go for him with all my heart; and as news is ever stirring at the barber's shop, I doubt not I shall pick up something that will keep your honour in ammunition of that sort till the Diurnal comes in with the account."

"Do so, Davy," said Sir Hugh, "and there needed not, Davy, to ask my leave; for whilst you are at Mount Edgcumbe, sharing the bounty of Sir Piers, I hold you to be as much his man as my own. And, hark ye, Davy; when you are about it, after doing your errand to Trim Foretop, just step home and see how all things are going on in the way of trade; and if the 'prentices have not been idle; and tell my wife, Dame Sibella, all that has chanced here, and that, possibly, I may not be able to leave Sir Piers Edgcumbe till to-morrow morning."

"I will do your honour's bidding," replied the Cornet, "without forgetting an item of the order; and I hope to be there and back again as fast as one of your honour's old scouts at the siege of Plymouth."

"I doubt it not, Davy," said Sir Hugh. "Go thy ways, Davy," he added, as the Cornet closed the door after him, "thou honest compound of summing and serving, of double entry at an account, and single file at mounting a breach."

Sir Piers now addressed the stranger, pressed him to take refreshment, and shewed him every attention kindness could suggest. The young gentleman declined partaking of the morning meal, and declared that the housekeeper had long since supplied his wants before she had attended to the family.

"You must, I fear, still feel almost unfit to leave your chamber," said Sir Piers, "after such perils as those you last night encountered. May I ask," he added, in a manner that shewed a kind feeling of interest, and that not merely idle curiosity prompted the question, "may I ask, if the relation is not too painful at this moment, by what means you came into the boat, whose upset so near the shore enabled us, under Providence, to have the satisfaction of being of some service to you?"

"You have a right, the most undoubted right, to know all," replied the young man, "since you have bought it at the price of your own danger, in a generous effort to save me. Blessed be the Lord of mercy, it was crowned with success! You, sir, have received me and my wounded and suffering attendant with the same charity with which Publius received the shipwrecked Paul and the crew in the Island of Melita; but I have no power, as did that guest and holy apostle, to do you any act of service in requital for your generosity; but my gratitude and thanks to you, to your friends, and above all, to yonder gentleman (pointing to Sir Hugh), can never cease but with life."

Sir Hugh Piper, though he acknowledged this speech by a bow, nevertheless winked at Sir Piers, and touched his fore-

head as he did so, as if bidding him observe that the young man wore his hair cropped; and, somewhat rashly, thinking his quoting Scripture was a sure sign that the stranger could not belong to the right church (for it must be confessed the generality of the cavaliers were not at all too familiar with their Bibles), he at once, in his own mind, dubbed him a Roundhead and a Puritan to boot. If right or wrong in his conjecture remains to be seen.

"I was returning from Barbadoes," continued the stranger, "whither I had been sent (and I confess to you much against my inclination) by my godfather and guardian, to take upon me the management of some property in that island, that would be mine on my coming of age. The Old James, the vessel in which I was embarked, and the Virginia, quitted the port of Barbadoes about the same time. We met on the high seas; and both ships encountered a fearful storm for many days. Yesterday, about noon, both were in distress; and so great was our danger that, seeing the ship we were on board must founder, my attendant and a few other persons determined to attempt saving themselves in the boat; I followed. It was fortunate we took this resolution: for, alas! we soon after beheld a dismal sight—the Old James dashed to pieces on the Eddystone reef. The Virginia kept off the rocks; but we heard her firing, continually, signals of distress amidst the roar of the wind and the ocean; and sometimes we saw the flashes of her guns, when we could not hear their report."

"Those signals," said Sir Piers, "first drew attention to the vessel; we were warned of it by Hezekiah: and, in going down to the beach to see what could be done, I first perceived the boat. The vessel drove safe, though no doubt much strained, into Cawsand Bay; and though the luckless boat upset and many were lost, yet I thank God, that you who are so young, and seem to be so promising, are saved, I trust, for many years of happiness."

A sigh, a melancholy look, and a glance (which the quick-eyed Robina observed) stolen at her friend Agnes, as she sat looking down with unmoved gravity, were the only answers that the young gentleman gave to this speech.

Sir Piers now continued, "Much as I lament that this attendant of yours should be so dangerously hurt; yet, considering how rocky it is on the shore where the boat swamped, I rather wonder both were not killed, than feel surprised one should have received an injury likely to be fatal."

"My fear it may be so," said the stranger, "would induce me to trespass on your charity, and to request that you would suffer this unfortunate man to have the attendance of some

godly minister of his own persuasion. He is a Presbyterian; and as he has intervals of perfect reason, I conceive it would be the fulfilment of a Christian duty, which we owe to each other, however much we may differ on more minute points of doctrine, to see that the sick bed of this man—it may soon become the bed of death—is not left without spiritual advice and comfort."

"Certainly," said Sir Hugh, "I am so far an advocate for liberty of conscience—though I hold no man has any right to dissent from the Established Church that was, and that now is no more, let him think what he will—as to vote for what you propose."

"There is in this house," said Sir Piers, "a minister of the Presbyterian persuasion, who was last night most instrumental in saving you. He is an honest man, and I will have him warned of your desire. I doubt not he will most gladly offer any ghostly comfort on the present occasion. What may be the name of your attendant?"

"Gabriel," replied the young man, "that is the name by which I call him; though when he is perfectly himself, he is somewhat jealous of a title he has assumed since what he deems his conversion. He now calls himself Grace-on-High Gabriel."

"And if his creed be true," said Sir Hugh Piper, "he seems in a fair way to take a cruise to try the efficacy of his name. I wish him a safe voyage, though he sails not in the right-freighted ship under the King's colours in the good church of England. And pray, young gentleman, having heard your servant's name, if it is not an impertinent question, what may be your own?"

There was a moment's pause, and a slight blush passed over the stranger's cheeks before he said "Amias Radcliffe is my name."

No word or spell pronounced by an old witch in the working of her charm ever produced a more sudden effect than did these few words on all present, save on Mistress Agnes, who still continued to look grave as she pursued some needle work at a little table to which she had retired after her hasty and comfortless meal.

Sir Hugh Piper drew suddenly up as he was pacing the room; a favourite exercise with him ever since he had been accustomed to walk the deck in some of his voyages to the West Indies. Again he intermitted the exercise of his pipe, and stared at the young stranger, something in the same way as a man would stare at a great offender or malefactor who is going to be hanged, and who excites curiosity unmingled with

respect. A change still more decided perhaps, appeared in Sir Piers Edgcumbe; for he stepped some paces back on hearing who was his guest; and though he did not fix upon him an eye of wonder, yet a gravity, amounting almost to austerity, settled on every feature of his face, as the single word "Indeed!" passed his lips.

Robina also looked grave, though she had not done so till now since the day she heard of King Charles having been seized by the ruffian, Cornet Joice, at Holmby. Even Orgar seemed to understand that all was not right; for on seeing his master draw back from the stranger, he raised his head, though not his body, curled up his nose, shewed his white fangs, and uttered a low and somewhat savage growl. "Peace, Orgar; be hushed, fool," said Sir Piers; "silence, I say."

The young man resumed his narration, and with something of more confidence, as if his spirit rallied at the sight of the internal repugnance or displeasure thus silently but evidently evinced towards him by his auditors. "I am Amias Radcliffe, and an orphan," he said: "my godfather and guardian is a gentleman too well known in these parts for his name to be new to you, Sir Piers. Sir John Copplestone of Warleigh is the person to whom I owe obedience, till having completed my twenty-first year shall put me in possession of my liberty, and a fair estate, held for me in trust by my guardian during a long minority. I am Amias, the only son of the late Sir Walter Radcliffe—possibly you may already have heard my name?"

"I have, indeed, young man," said Sir Piers, sternly, "and I have heard it coupled with bloodshed and rebellion. Young as you are, if report speaks truth, Sir Shilton Calmady, the royalist, fell by your hand at the siege of Ford House. I would you had borne another name."

"He did so," exclaimed the young man with spirit, "but it was in the heat of battle. I led on a party of volunteers in Waller's detachment to the siege of Ford House. We had passed the graff that surrounded it at extreme peril. Sir Shilton Calmady headed a sally made by the besieged, and as he rushed forward, sword in hand, cried aloud to his followers, 'Give the Roundhead villains no quarter.'"

"Did I not say last night he was a roundhead rascal by the cut of his hair, even before he came to his senses?" whispered Sir Hugh Piper to Robina.

The stranger meanwhile pursued his tale with an animation that sent no small quantity of blood into his pale cheeks, and lighted up an eye capable of the most varied expression. "No sooner was the order given, than Sir Shilton Calmady rushed

upon me to fell me to the earth: we encountered manfully, and fought a fair fight, till both were wounded and dripping with our blood; at length Calmady fell. As a brave foe, to this hour do I lament him; and I doubt not he would have done the like for me, had I fallen by his sword as he did by mine, in a just cause of quarrel."

"A just cause of quarrel!" cried Sir Piers. "Young man, do you call that quarrel just which has its basis in rebellion? Upsetting the venerable constitution of our laws, the union of Church and State; a thing till now held sacred as the marriage bond—a union not to be sundered but by an act of violence and treason, by trampling on all old institutions, venerable, if but for age, and like most aged things, therefore, become the scoff of fools; to tear down the ancient monarchy of England, to imprison her king—a king whose concessions have but opened the door for higher and more impudent demands—a king whose goodness was of more than mortal mould, whose heart was with his people, whose hopes are now in heaven! This is your cause; and for this did you shed the blood of a gallant man, of my beloved friend, Sir Shilton Calmady."

"I did it from no private enmity," said young Radcliffe. "Calmady and myself were both volunteers; he on the side of the king and of arbitrary power, whilst I was on that of the people and of liberty."

"Ay, that is it, my brave fellow," said Sir Hugh Piper, "that's the cry with you all! You Roundheads start up, and would lay violent hands on the father who gave you life, to shew the liberty of fanaticism and rebellion: you cut your fellow-countrymen's throats, and cry it is all for the good of the people! and whilst hewing and hacking at an honourable gentleman, because his zeal was hateful to your heart, you knock him down stone dead, and say it was from no private enmity! Whip me, such nice distinctions, I say, with a cat-and-nine-tails. Why, Orgar, the water-dog there, would teach you better principles: since he deems himself bound to be faithful to his master at all times and under all circumstances, and does not turn upon him, as you did upon the king, your master, on the first yelping of the ill-mannered dogs of the Parliament."

"The king abused his power," said Radcliffe: "he was arbitrary, oppressive, and led away by evil counsellors."

"It is false!" said Sir Hugh: "he was too meek, too condescending, too yielding to daring claimants."

"The king and his evil counsellors," said Radcliffe, "lost Rochelle, and betrayed the cause of the unfortunate Huguenots—a cause he ought to have espoused; but he betrayed it

by leaning to Popery. He was eager after monopolies and ship-money, whilst he left the high seas so ill guarded, that the merchant vessels became a prey to Turkish pirates."

"I lost a vessel," cried Sir Hugh, "by the turbaned thieves myself, but I was never, therefore, unjust enough to lay the blame of it on the king's shoulders; and I do not see what right you have, young gentleman—you, who never owned nor floated a carrack on your own bottom, to bring this charge against his majesty. I think, in this case at least, I am the best judge, whatever you may be concerning the liberties of the people!"

The ironical sneer with which this was said seemed calculated to keep up the heat of the argument; and Sir Piers Edgcumbe, who had far more consideration and prudence than Sir Hugh, having subdued the first shock he felt on hearing the name of the young volunteer by whom his friend Calmady was slain, somewhat recovered himself, and spoke in a milder manner, though still with distance and gravity.

"Master Amias Radcliffe," he said, "since it has pleased Providence to make me, in some sort, the instrument of your preservation, when you were shipwrecked, in returning to your guardian, so near your native coast, and that you are now under my roof in the privileged character of a guest, and in the yet more sacred character of the unfortunate; I say, since it has pleased Providence these things should happen, whatever natural reluctance I must feel at the sight of one who fought against my royal master and killed my friend, I nevertheless submit to a will wiser and higher than my own. Under my roof, Master Radcliffe, you are safe, and shall be respected; as in your person I respect the bond of hospitality. Rest you here, therefore, and welcome, till such time as you can journey with comfort to your guardian's house. I will furnish you with all needful aid: and as I see you act the part of a kind master to your attendant, who is so grievously hurt, and, possibly, now on his death-bed, do not let anything that may have this day passed, on the difference of our opinions, hasten your departure from my roof one moment before you have done all that humanity and Christian charity demand. Stay by your attendant, if you will, and see the result. This ascertained, your servant, better or dead,—and his death, perhaps, will ensue—I need not point out to you that the opposition of our feelings and situations make us but bad companions in one house, though that be my own. His danger determined, the sooner we part the better."

This speech was delivered with the utmost gravity; yet there was a frankness in the manner of the speaker that shewed him

to be sincere. The young man answered with some haughtiness: "I thank you, Sir Piers, for all your kindness; but I trust I shall not long intrude upon it. The situation of this wounded man, an old and favoured servant of my guardian, renders it impossible I should leave him till I hear the surgeon's opinion of his danger—that ascertained, I take my leave; and though conscious I quit the presence of one who scruples not to declare his enmity towards me, my gratitude for the worthless life which he has been the means of preserving, can cease but with that life. I wish we might part on other terms; for I fear I must never hope to call Sir Piers Edgcumbe my friend, however deeply I may feel he has been such to me."

"You may truly say that," said Sir Hugh Piper, "since a friend in need is a friend indeed, and that has Sir Piers been to you."

Here the conversation dropped into cold formality; and soon after Hezekiah being summoned, Radcliffe went to visit his sick servant.

CHAPTER X.

Dire was the tossing, deep the groans: despair
Tended the sick, busiest from couch to couch;
And over them triumphant death his dart
Shook, but delay'd to strike, though oft invoked
With vows, as their chief good, and final hope.
MILTON.

IT was the lively Robina who left the parlour, during the late painful scene, to call Hezekiah to do his duty to one of his own persuasion in the hour of distress. Robina had two motives for hastening her errand: the first arose from pity towards the sufferer, and the second from a hope that the presence of the minister on so solemn an occasion would put an end to the political disputes by calling off Radcliffe's attention to his servant; as, in fact, it did most effectually. Gay as she was, both by nature and habit, yet Robina, as she passed along to summon the minister, sighed deeply, and felt that depression of spirits which every well-constituted mind cannot but experience when a fellow-creature lies in the same house, expecting each hour his final dismissal from mortality.

"Death," said Robina gravely to Hezekiah, "death brings serious thoughts in its visitation."

"True, young lady," replied Hezekiah, who looked somewhat surprised at hearing the very gravest sentence he had ever known pass the lips of Robina. "True, death is the *ultimum terribilium;* and what are we but a little breathing dust? for even when I look on your fair cheeks Mistress Robina, I always endeavour to think of a churchyard, as a necessary keeping under of the spirit, that is apt to delight itself in such a fading toy. The evils of beauty, Mistress Robina, are manifold and manifest. First, beauty maketh womankind care little for the deformity of the soul, so long as the body do not partake of it. Secondly, it is a snare—a snare to the pride of the heart and the desire of the eyes. Thirdly, it is a flower withered by a thousand chances, and hath no continuing in one place. Fourthly, it is the great Vanity Fair of outward adornments; a tempting to creature follies, and a dressing up of that poor silly flesh and blood, that must shortly become a prey to worms. I am sorry for you, Mistress Robina; and for your soul's sake, and the sake of the good-will I bear to

you, I could wish to see you, if it might be so, with no more beauty than the most homely wench that ever found in her homeliness a weaning from the world, and a saving among the saints."

Robina, who probably would have considered such a circumstance in the change of her beauty as a very great evil instead of a very desired good, and had no mind to hear the "fifthly" of the sermon which Hezekiah seemed about to commence on the subject, cut him short in his discourse; and leading the way, conducted him at once into the little anteroom, next to the sick man's chamber, were he was joined by Radcliffe; and both now passed into a long low room, feebly lighted by two narrow windows, whose mullions were large and thick; the room was paneled with a dark kind of wood that had a funereal appearance.

Within the ample chimney there sat, bending over a fire reduced to embers, an old crone, who had taken it in turn with another domestic to watch the sick man's bed during the night. She was so bent in the back as to have the appearance of being naturally deformed, and her nose and chin almost met. She sat cowering over the fire, nodding her head as if half asleep, after her night's watching.

Here also might be seen in abundance the usual accompaniments of a sick room. Pipkins, spoons, phials, cups, and a dial to regulate the hours of giving the medicines to the patient; with a bottle of strong waters, and a drinking-horn for the nurses, who possibly measured their own time of receiving such a comfortable support to their spirits and their fatigue, with the same wholesome exactness observed towards the sick whom they attended. Near the bed sat Dame Gee; a little crooked-legged table was by her side, on which lay some herbs, a phial or two, a book, and the ashen wand, with which she was wont to perform all her charms. She was seated in a great elbow chair, with her legs on the foot cushion; whilst the housekeeper, a neat elderly woman, was seen near her, on a lower seat, and seemed to be looking up to Dame Gee, who was softly speaking, with that air of profound reverence and respect which persons of inferior quality are accustomed to observe towards the great in rank, or the celebrated in art.

As Radcliffe and Hezekiah entered the room, the housekeeper rose up; but Dame Gee, as if her skill in the management of the patient rendered her mistress of the room, made a slight inclination of the head, but did not stir from her seat.

The inquiries of the new comers were answered by a shake

of the head from the housekeeper, as she said, "Alas! 'tis like enough to be his ending; for he's been wandering all the morning, though he has his lucid intervals now and then, when he would call sometimes for a minister, and at others for strong waters. And then his wanderings would come again; and then there was nothing but about the sea and the ship, and you, sir (addressing Radcliffe), and another gentleman of these parts that he called upon by name, one Sir John Copplestone."

"Hush," said Radcliffe, "speak not so loud, he will hear you; it may disturb him. I will speak to him."

"No," said Hezekiah, "that will I; for it is my duty to go to him; and in this sickness the Lord and I will make his bed together." So saying, he advanced to the bed where lay Grace-on-high Gabriel.

He was a man between forty and fifty years old, of a strongly marked countenance, as brown as a piece of mahogany, with eyes large and black, that in health had in them a character of fierceness, and now from want of sleep and fever stared nearly out of their sockets, and partook of the wild restlessness of delirium. His head was bound up with linen, and his jet-coloured hair, that peeped forth from under the bandages, appeared clotted with blood. His arms lay extended on the outside of the bed clothes: the old housekeeper had irritated him by a contest to make him keep his hands under them during half the night. He looked dreadfully ill; haggard, black round the eyes; and, though he moved with pain, was restless. Hezekiah touched the sick man's hand; it was burning with fever. Having addressed some words to the patient, and no answer being given, Radcliffe approached the bed, and spoke. "Do you know me, Gabriel?" he said, in a soft voice: "Do you know where you are?"

"Burning bricks in Egypt," answered Gabriel, "and not able to come within the promised land, because of——I will not speak his name. Because of one who has seared his conscience with a red-hot iron, and keeps mine fast locked within the red velvet cabinet."

"The what?" said Hezekiah. "Alas! how he wanders. What is he talking about?"

"He seems to be thinking of Warleigh," said young Radcliffe, "and of the red velvet cabinet that stands in my guardian's own chamber."

"Do not open it," cried Gabriel, who caught these words. "Do not open it for worlds; or a spirit will come up like that of Samuel to Saul. For an old man will come up, covered with no mantle but with his sins; and will make quick work

with us all, because I have delayed to execute his fierce wrath on this Amalek."

"Of whom speaks he, think you?" said Hezekiah. "Alas! this is a fearful sight. How long has he been thus?"

"All the night long," said the housekeeper, "raving at intervals all the night long; and saying terrible things at odd whiles, and talking about the sea and the ship."

"The ship!" cried Gabriel; "the ship had never been saved if I had done all the business."

"Did you hear that?" said Hezekiah, groaning as he turned, to Radcliffe. "I do not like it; there must be some sad burthen on the poor soul, that the terrors of death should make such wild work in the brain and conscience. I would his reason might return, that I might talk to him; for loth were I to think him one of the sons of perdition, knowing that God doth devise means that his banished be not expelled from him. I will watch, and presently awaken him, and pour out fearful threatenings."

"Into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot," cried the sick man, who seemed to catch at all he heard, and to connect it with some strange subject that was uppermost in his thoughts: "all the flesh-hook brings up let Sir John Copplestone take to himself, for so they did in Shiloh to all the Israelites that came thither. And bid Master Amias Radcliffe never go home again. Oh! my head—my head!"

"Now begins his pain again," said the housekeeper, "he has talked himself worse. See how he turns about, and moves his lips, that look as dry and as parched and as black——"

"Water! water! give me water; drink, some drink," cried the patient."

"I will give it him," said Radcliffe.

"Not for worlds," said the housekeeper: "he has called for it all night, but I would not let him have it; for Doctor Hartshorn said, if he calls for drink, give him nothing but my potion, and only that at the proper hours. He must not have cold water in such a fever as this is for all the world."

"He shall have it; and I will answer it to Doctor Hartshorn," said Dame Gee, who rose up with an air of authority, and held a goblet of water to the sick man, which he drank off with the eagerness of one famished. At the interference of a person so much held in respect for her high talents in doctoring, charming, and nursing as was Dame Gee, the housekeeper submitted; and no longer opposed even a second glass of the same cooling beverage, which was both called for and granted with the same eagerness as the first. After this, the sick man lay down in his bed, and became quiet, whilst

the housekeeper declared he would soon have an interval of reason, as his delirium had hitherto come on by fits and starts, and that after he had been quiet a little while, he would know what he was about.

Hezekiah heard this with attention, and resolving to watch for such an opportunity, he begged all to leave the room, and suffer him to remain alone by the side of the sick man's bed. All instantly agreed to do so, except Dame Gee, who obstinately insisted on maintaining her post, as she whispered the housekeeper in the ear, that unless she stayed, the charm she had set up (the power of which would not begin to shew itself till a certain hour of the clock) would altogether fail. The housekeeper winked her acquiescence, and stating very civilly how wrong it was that all the nurses should leave the poor creature in such a state as he was in, obtained permission that Dame Gee should remain, if she consented to sit at the lower end of the room, where Hezekiah thought she would not hear the feeble words of the sick man in case he spoke.

The mistress of charms and spells consented to this arrangement; and having placed herself in a good easy chair not far from the fire, she sat quietly down. Now, whether she really felt desirous to take this opportunity of gaining repose, or whether, to use a Devonshire phrase, she only "made wise" to do so, in the hope to listen to any word that might be spoken, we cannot say; certain it is, she threw her apron over her head, leant it back against the high back of the chair, crossed her arms, and had soon the appearance of one who would compose herself for the enjoyment of a sound nap.

Hezekiah, who was neither the most penetrating nor suspicious of men, and who was too lately come into the neighbourhood to know much of the real character of Dame Gee, never suspected any artifice, if any there was worthy of suspicion; and having satisfied himself that the nurse, with the customary privilege of one who knew well her calling, was gone fast asleep, he took out his little clasped Bible, sat down by the bedside, and whilst ever and anon giving a look to the patient (to watch for some symptoms of returning reason, or to see if he inclined to rest), instructed himself between whiles, in reading the twelfth chapter of the second book of Samuel. This he so studied, that at last the worthy man (whose suspicions of the bad state of Grace-on-high Gabriel's conscience had been raised by the confused words dropped by the sufferer in his delirium) read himself into the conviction, that he was, like a second Nathan, now called upon to awaken and reprove another David, for some foul blot on his pretensions to being a son after God's own heart; an adoption to

which most of the sectaries of the day laid a very strong and particular claim.

For some time he read without perceiving any change in the quiet attitude of the exhausted patient; but at length he observed him stir, as his eye made the circuit of the room, as if he looked for some one he expected to see in it. A sigh, soft and low, escaped his lips; he placed his hand upon his forehead, and again looked anxiously around him. Hezekiah observed him attentively; and being convinced, by the steadiness of his eye, that he was now restored to reason, in one of those lucid intervals the housekeeper had mentioned, he determined not to lose the opportunity; and with a gentle hand drew back the bed curtain, as he said, "Brother, do you know me, or do you guess who I am?"

"No," replied the sick man, in a weak but steady voice, "I saw something here just now—a shadow, may be—but I thought it was like young Master Amias Radcliffe."

"It was no shadow, but himself," said the minister. "How feel you now, friend?"

"Alas! weary, because of the daughters of Heth," said Grace-on-high Gabriel: "they have sore tormented me all night, and especially one old woman, who denied me drink;" and turning in bed as he looked languidly at his comforter, added, in a weak voice, "Who art thou, and what is thy name?"

"Hezekiah," answered the minister.

"Hezekiah!" re-echoed Gabriel: "if thou art as the good Hezekiah, bid the shadow of the dial go backward ten degrees like that of Ahaz, that I may have space given me to repent of this evil, and not go down into hell alive."

"To repent!" exclaimed Hezekiah. "Oh! delay it not. I am, brother of sin and dust," he continued, in a solemn and impressive tone, "I am, though all unworthy, one of God's chosen servants: set up, like the prophet Ezekiel, to cry aloud and spare not; to be as a watchman to the house of Israel. And here do I perceive my call. For when I behold the man of sin, and see guilt in all its terrors shake to the very centre his departing soul; if I forbear to say unto the wicked, 'thou shalt surely die,' he shall die in his sin, but his blood shall be required at my hand. Even so will I call on thee; for full well do I perceive by these wild flights of a distempered brain, the up-castings of a foul and filthy conscience. Go to! disburthen it, make it a clean work, and let the man and the house be new altogether."

Grace-on-high Gabriel answered this address with a deep groan.

"I see it," continued Hezekiah, "I see it: some deep and

foul blots, whitened over like a whited wall, now come out in their true colours. Hitherto the devil has been busy, as he ever is, in his great work as a deceiver. But hearken not to him; he was a murderer from the beginning. It is he who inspires furious thoughts, inflames the blood, fires the brain, pours out strivings and wrath, makes man as a raging lion eager for the slaughter."

Another groan from the patient answered to this description of the foul fiend.

"He is," continued Hezekiah, as his voice, manner, and eye became elevated with the energy of his own feelings, "he is the terrible one, when a greater than he makes him, like his creatures of thunder, of hail, and of the fiery storm, an instrument to punish a rebellious sinner. It is Satan who sets the brand to the slumbering embers of an evil conscience, flames them, makes death come armed from hell; and having been the tempter of man, now becomes the stern accuser of him to God and to his own soul. But turn again, turn ye; for why should ye die? Resist Satan; I will wrestle with him for you, and together we will beat him back. Oh! repent, repent, and sweet shall be thy sleep, though the grave becomes thy bed; for the breast of the reconciled of God is as the temple of peace!"

Whilst Hezekiah made this speech, or, if the reader pleases, this sermon, in which there was so much of truth blended with the wild zeal and language of the fanatics of his day, his whole countenance and demeanour changed; for his strong-marked features had in them an expression of high enthusiasm.

In the brow of Hezekiah there was a solemn elevation: sincerity gave feeling as well as energy to his words; and he stood by the side of the sick bed, his tall figure full of dignity and command, exhorting, counselling, and persuading the wounded, alike in body and in soul, to redeem the time that yet remained, however brief it might be. Gabriel listened, uttering every now and then a stifled groan; at length he made an effort to rise up; Hezekiah assisted him, and ably (for he was strong and powerful whenever he exerted himself to put forth his strength). Gabriel sat up in bed, propped by pillows, and looking as ghastly as some of the old gothic pictures of Lazarus, bound hand and foot in the garments of the grave. Gabriel looked at the minister, and then slowly round the room; and finally cast a speaking eye on Hezekiah, as he pointed with his finger to Dame Gee, who was reposing in the chair, as much as to say, "She is in the room."

"She sleeps," said Hezekiah. "Notwithstanding, if it is thy wish, I will awaken and dismiss her."

"Do so," said Grace-on-high, "and bid her get me the doublet I wore before I was laid in this bed. In the close pocket there is a small horn case, well secured, containing some letters, that ere I die—if I must die—I will put into Master Amias Radcliffe's hands; and they will tell him all—all. I have not strength nor memory clear enough to speak at this hour—only get me the doublet."

Hezekiah looked round the room, and saw no doublet: it instantly occurred to him, that as it must have been wet when Gabriel, on the previous night, had been put to bed, most likely his clothes had been removed, for the purpose of getting them dried by the fire. He now determined to ask for the doublet (but without saying for what purpose); and thinking to kill two birds with one stone, to get rid of Dame Gee, and to make her bear his message to the housekeeper (whilst he hastened to receive the confession of the sick man ere the return of delirium should prevent its being made), he walked up to her, and giving her no very gentle shake, disturbed her slumbers, either real or pretended, and desired her to go and inquire for the doublet of the shipwrecked man.

Dame Gee seemed hard to awaken; but when awake, strange to say, she made no objection to quitting the room, though she had before been adverse to it, and instantly set off to do as she was required. In a short time she returned, bringing the doublet with her, which was but half dry. She would then have resumed her station, but Hezekiah forbade her in a tone of authority; and desiring her to go and send in Master Radcliffe, as the wounded man desired to see him, he shut the door upon her, and secured it with a bolt.

He now brought the doublet to the bed: Gabriel looked eagerly upon it; and Hezekiah examining a closely contrived and secure pocket in the breast, that the sick man pointed out, found it open, and nothing in it.

The minister, who conceived the horn case with the letters was of importance, from the manner of the sick man when he spoke of them, instantly acquainted the housekeeper with the loss; she bustled, and made every inquiry, but nobody knew any thing about the matter, and least of all Dame Gee, who declared she had been disturbed from a sound sleep to go and fetch the doublet, and executed her commission in no time at all. The housekeeper, Dame Gee, and all the servants, agreed in the opinion, that the horn box must have been lost when the sick man was tossed and tumbled about in the waves; for they did not see but if the rocks and the water could knock a man of the head, so as nearly to kill him, why they should not be able to unfasten an inside pocket, that was

secured by no lock and key, and only by an old button. Whether this mode of reasoning on the subject might be false or true, Hezekiah could do no other than submit to it; and Gabriel, on hearing the horn case had been lost in the sea, begged very earnestly that Master Radcliffe would not delay to come to him. Hezekiah sent a swifter messenger than the old housekeeper, who had stayed to gossip about the doublet and the loss on the road; and Radcliffe soon appeared.

CHAPTER XI.

A fox, full fraught with seeming sanctity,
That fear'd an oath; but like the devil, would lie:
Who look'd like lent, and had the holy leer,
And durst not sin before he said a prayer.
DRYDEN.

As Radcliffe approached the bed, it struck him that there was a very great change in his servant; and calling Hezekiah aside, he said in a whisper, "Reverend man, have you never heard that when any one, dangerously sick, has been for many hours deprived of reason, the return of it is generally the forerunner of death? I am much deceived if yonder man is not fast approaching his last moments. Look at his eye, it is watery and glazed. See how he seems to shiver, and catches at the sheets, whilst his cheeks are shrunk and his lips are livid. I am sure this change is more than common. How I wish the doctor would come!"

"If you think so," said Hezekiah, "for the sake of Him who saith 'How oft is the candle of the wicked put out,' delay not thou to speak with him; for truly his soul could not pass in peace till he saw you; and he said he had much to tell you, of woful consequence. There is no one here but ourselves."

"I will give him his potion first," said Amias Radcliffe: "the housekeeper told me, as I came in, that it was the hour. Perhaps the medicine may help him to speak with more ease."

Radcliffe gave it; and as Gabriel, who swallowed it with extreme difficulty, returned the cup to his young master's hand, he looked wistfully in his face, sighed, and said, "Come near me, Master Amias, and listen; for I am sure I am a dying man: and since I felt so, all my former life seems changed. All I thought good before, all I wanted to gain, now is nothing. I would give all, like Dives, for a drop of water to cool my tongue; or, what is better, for that pool which should wash away my sins."

"Gabriel," said Hezekiah, jumping up from the bedside, where he had been quietly sitting; "Gabriel, do not entertain such an unprofitable wish; do not sigh for the waters of Beth

lehem, as did David, out of a vain spirit. Do not become a dipper or anabaptist, 'tis as foolish as a pædobaptist; and I will argue with you respecting the unprofitableness of it in every point, as well as could Baxter himself in his answer to ——"

"Peace," said Radcliffe, "he is in no case for disputations; let us hear what he would say."

"I would say," continued Gabriel, "that whilst I thought myself in the liberty of the promise, I find I have been but in the house of bondage all my life long, making bricks without straw, under a hard taskmaster. Come near, for oh! I am very sick, and I feel cold; and the room seems to go round with me, and—and—where are you?"

"Here," said Radcliffe: "he is worse, Hezekiah—call for help!"

"No, no," cried Gabriel, in a broken voice, "it is all in vain; death knocks at the door, he knocks hard: trembling takes hold of my flesh: in a minute I come. Yet, oh: merciful Father, give me breath to warn you, Master Amias——"

"Of what? Of whom?" said the astonished Radcliffe.

"Of your guardian, whom you have fearfully offended—in a way, I fear, not to be forgiven."

"Not to be forgiven!" repeated Radcliffe with amazement: "this is incomprehensible; surely my refusing to——"

"Let me speak all I have to tell," said Gabriel, faintly. "He sent you to Barbadoes under my care, at a time when you were in wretched health. He charged me to keep you there, let you be never so much worse. I did all I could, but you would not stay. The rest of his orders about you were written to me in letters; I kept them, with one important paper that concerned you, in the horn case, next my bosom. I kept them thus carefully, that if anything unexpectedly should come of it, I might have the means to shew him his own commands for what I did—and—worse than this——"

Gabriel paused; for he spoke with extreme pain, and some marks of blood appeared upon his lips. He had, in fact, bled so much internally (as the chief injury he had received was in the chest), that it struck Radcliffe this return of the bleeding was, perhaps, a fatal symptom. Shocked at what he had already heard about his guardian, though in some measure it did but confirm his own suspicions, he eagerly listened, in the hope to gain farther intelligence before Gabriel might become too weak or too lost in mind to tell it all collectedly."

"Beware of him," said the dying man: "do not go home—that is, not till you are full twenty-one years old; and then——" Gabriel paused; Radcliffe hung over him, scarcely

drawing breath while he listened; 'and then go suddenly to Warleigh, and insist ——" Again Gabriel paused; and seemed so faint and exhausted, that Radcliffe snatched up a bottle of essence which stood upon the table. The strong pungent power of the essence for a moment had its effects, and once more the sufferer ejaculated a few broken accents, though it should seem the clearness of his faculties was again overcast; and that though he did not wholly forget the subject of his discourse, his memory and perception were too much affected for it any longer to be connected. "He is a dreadful man," said Gabriel, "and hath many devices in his heart; and, like the grave, he never has enough."

"Of whom speak you?" said Hezekiah. "Beware what you say; beware, sinful man, how you accuse another—that you put not your own burthen on another man's back. The tongue is a little fire, soon kindled and very deadly in its strife."

"Peace, I pray you," said Radcliffe: "I know well of whom he speaks. Gabriel, go on. Can you tell me anything of my father's death—any particulars? for I was a child when it happened, and my guardian never speaks on that subject."

"There is a cause for it," said Gabriel, in a low hollow voice; and, looking wildly round the room as his eye, though dull and watery, seemed to seek for some object it feared to meet, he added, in an agitated manner, "Do not let Sir John Copplestone come in, and I will tell you all."

"He is not near you, Gabriel," replied Radcliffe; "he does not know but that we are still at Barbadoes."

"Does he not?" said Gabriel, as a ghastly smile stole over his features; "but the devil does, and he may tell him; for they are close as brothers when there is anything to be got; and he will have all when your godfather dies."

"This is dreadful!" exclaimed Radcliffe. "Gabriel, if you have sense enough left to understand my words; I solemnly adjure you, as you must answer to Him who can pardon and can save at the dreadful day of judgment, tell me all you know. Tell me of those injuries my guardian may have done, or may meditate to do, against me: Speak! What have been his wicked acts—what yours?"

"Mine!" cried Gabriel, in a tone that had in it an accent of horror; "it was not mine: I did but put my hand as a witness to it. Will, him they call Black Will, beware of him! But wherefore do the wicked live, and become old, and are mighty in power?"

"He wanders sadly," said Radcliffe; "is there no way to fix his attention?"

"I feel it," said Gabriel, shuddering; "his hand is all cold —death freezes up my blood! But there is heat enough, they say, in hell. I wonder how Korah and his company bore it; for as for us we are many, and can put it out: all but one may —all but one; since nothing can quench the fierce flame kindled for him. Yet your guardian did nothing but feed it with a few papers; and there they burn, the flame never dying, to consume himself. What o'clock is it?"

"This distracts me!" said Radcliffe. "What do you mean by papers? Gabriel, what papers have been all thus burnt?"

"All! I did not say all," exclaimed the miserable man; "one he dares not burn—for his own sake, he dares not—and he keeps that sealed to his own condemnation." Again he stopped, and a slight convulsion passed over his face, as he caught and grasped Radcliffe's hand. His touch was shuddering; it was cold and clammy as that of a corpse.

"What paper does my guardian keep, and where?" said Radcliffe, in an eager manner.

"In the red velvet cabinet," replied Gabriel, with a groan; "there is kept the fatal secret of your—your ——" he fainted as he spoke the last word.

Radcliffe was now compelled to call for assistance; and the old housekeeper, with many other servants, came running into the room. By strong applications the wretched man was once more restored to consciousness; but he could swallow nothing that was attempted to be poured down his throat. His eye became more watery, a cold sweat bathed his temples, and stood in large drops on his brow, as the convulsed twitchings of his hands and the muscles of his face, together with the coldness of the extremities, shewed that he was dying.

Hezekiah saw his condition, and felt shocked that he should die without uttering a prayer for God's mercy, though the confession of his sins was, perhaps, in these moments as acceptable, considering the wandering state of his mind. Hezekiah prayed by him and for him, in a deep and emphatic manner, and conjured the sufferer, if he had but the power to utter one word, to let it be a call for mercy on his soul.

"Thou wilt not die thus," he said; "thou must not die thus, and go before the Lord of heaven and earth—He who stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing—and yet say not so much as Lord have mercy on me!"

Whether Hezekiah had ever heard or not of the celebrated scene representing the death of Cardinal Beaufort, we cannot tell: possibly he might; though certainly had he considered that so fine a lesson to the dying sinner was to be found in

what he deemed an abomination—a stage play—he would hardly, as he actually did, desire Grace-on-high Gabriel to make some such sign as Henry did the Cardinal, to shew his trust in God.

Gabriel's lips were seen to move: he struggled—he strove—but no sound came; for all power of speech was denied him, so great was his exhaustion. "Put thy hands together," said Hezekiah with great earnestness: "let me but see thou hast so much of understanding left as to shew the outward mark or sign of prayer, and my soul will be comforted for thine."

"He cannot," said Radcliffe: "look how he shrinks and shudders, as if the air blew cold upon him, yet is there none."

"The air!" exclaimed Hezekiah: "is not the thin air the minister through which comes the sightless, yet sight-conveying, light? Even so is the Spirit unseen, but piercing, the minister of God's truth. Oh! that it might pass to yonder sinful man!"

A faint cry, as of extreme agony, followed soon after by that death rattle of the throat that so often attends dissolution, now convinced all present the last moments of Gabriel were at hand. Hezekiah continued to pray for him, even when all sense was gone, to enable him to join in the petition. Whilst doing so, he raised his eyes from the sight of agonised nature to lift them up to heaven; but when Hezekiah again fixed them upon mortality and earth, all was over; and that frame, which had so lately contained a spirit, active, alive to the influence of hope or to the terrible alarm of conscience, was a lifeless corpse!

Radcliffe looked on in silence, shuddering with internal horror at the terrible scene of death he had witnessed in one who was apparently so ill fitted to meet the last enemy of mankind.

Hezekiah, with Christian charity, closed his eyes; and for the edification of those who stood about the bed, he thus addressed them:—"Gabriel is gone," said the worthy man with a sigh; "it is not for us to say whither. Let us hope that some internal sign of repentance—seen but by Him whom the smallest thing doth not escape for mercy—may have found grace and acceptance even for this sinner. No, my brethren, let us not scan the ways of God, but rather our own ways; and so make this bed of death as an example to us all. Death to most men differs in its consequences, but as men differ in their preparation. To the good soldier of our Lord, a swift summons is but as a swift victory. It is when the flaming sword of God cuts off the wicked, that there is captivity and conquest; even as the sons of Eli were suddenly cut off be-

cause of their trangessions. Many are the ways of death, but one to that of life; and truly is it found in obedience to God. Remember this, friends, and profit by it."

The awful scene that had just passed, the solemn tone of admonition in which Hezekiah concluded this address, with the sight of the lifeless corpse, deeply affected all present; and the old housekeeper sobbed audibly, as on Radcliffe and Hezekiah leaving the chamber, she proceeded to direct the performance of those last offices paid to the bed of death.

CHAPTER XII.

His pole with pewter basins hung,
Black rotten teeth in order strung,
Ranged cups, that in the window stood,
Lined with red rags to look like blood,
Did well his threefold trade explain,
Who shaved, drew teeth, and breathed a vein.

GAY.

OUR readers will recollect, that before the sudden and fatal change appeared in Gabriel, Cornet Davy had been despatched to the house of Trim Foretop, the barber surgeon, to fetch him, that Grace-on-high might be bled, agreeably to the orders of Doctor Hartshorn, in case he should not be better in the morning. Now, as Davy had set off to do his errand as soon as commanded, he could not possibly know how unavailing it would be; and that grim death, who often steps in to take his turn with the doctor, should in this instance have so speedily settled the matter, quite contrary to the worthy practitioner's prognostics respecting the result of his own skill, contrary to the housekeeper's in favour of the noted Dame Gee, whose charms and spells had been so vigorously employed in the aid of the medicaments—charms and spells hitherto considered infallible, and very likely to be so considered again—since the failure of a witch, fortune-teller, or empiric, was never yet known to open the eyes of the credulous, determined, as they are, to keep them shut to their own folly; and thus do they verify the observation of Butler, which avers—

The pleasure is as great,
In being cheated as to cheat.

To return to Cornet Davy. He continued his way to the barber's shop, amusing himself, with calculating how much would be the return of profit Sir Hugh Piper might expect on certain goods shipped on speculation to the West Indies; how best to turn the same profit to account in service for the king: as it was one of the peculiarities of the mercantile Cornet's character, to think in conformity with his master. Davy was, indeed, in all things honest and disinterested. He had ever preferred his master's benefit to his own; and now, with the same liberality of principle, he followed the worthy knight's

example, and preferred the interests of the imprisoned Charles Stuart to those of Sir Hugh Piper.

Whilst the Cornet is thus entertaining his own mind with these lively ideas, we must beg to leave him and his castles in the air, and step on before him to the barber's shop—a place of so much importance, and so very different to what it has become in these degenerate days, that it deserves our notice somewhat at large.

Now, alas! the lack of periwigs, the disuse of beards with pointed peaks, and the more simple mode of wearing the hair, have altogether so much reduced this once distinguished craft, that the very character of the English barber himself is changed.

The habitation of Trim Foretop was situated in the suburbs of the good town of Plymouth, which had undergone no small damage during the time of the siege.

One of these shattered dwellings Trim had contrived to occupy, at a low rent, on the express condition that he should repair it; and this he did at the very cheapest rate, helping himself from the ruins of the old and battered buildings around him to any such materials as first came to hand; and as the house had many apartments, running side by side (not unlike hutches for rabbits), the provident Mistress Foretop conceived her domicile might be made useful in more ways than one, and therefore determined on the letting of lodgings.

The door was sheltered by a projecting porch, accommodated on either side with substantial stone benches, which, though not the most soft or inviting for the gossips, nevertheless frequently found occupants, when the little shop was as full as it could possibly be with idlers or customers—two sorts of visitants that left honest Trim very little leisure on his hands; as in his more regular hours of business, he had no lack of it; and if he were busied in doing nothing, he had plenty of neighbours willing to help him.

Above the doorway projected a pole, that proper cognisance of a barber, having its origin in the most remote antiquity; for some refer it to the Norman, and others even to the Saxon times; though we something doubt the very existence of the craft during the latter named period, as it is an established fact that the Saxons wore their hair long and uncut, as well as their beards. The pole over Trim's door was garnished with a red twisted ribbon, to denote that bleeding at the arm might be had within, as well as at the chin, when by an unlucky slip of the hand, a thing that not unfrequently happened, blood chanced to be drawn in the operation of the razor.

Like all shavers, from the days of the famous barber of the

Arabian tales down to the present times, Trim was noted for talking. How could he be otherwise? for, indeed, we conceive a silent barber so out of nature, that wherever found he would infallibly be looked upon with curiosity and wonder. Many reasons may be assigned to account for this propensity to talking in the knights of the razor; the rapid circulation of news, brought in by every customer, and retailed to the next occupant of the shaving bench, begets in the barber a habit of chattering; and no little temptation to talking on the part of such a practitioner, may arise from the absolute command he has over his antagonist, especially should such be disposed to contradiction, or to make assertion supply the place of truth—things of frequent occurrence in political debates, where the disputants are, generally speaking, inclined to hear no one so much as themselves.

The interior of Trim's shop was hardly less curious than its exterior, and displayed as many varieties in trade, as did the dwelling in architecture. In the windows might be seen, placed to the greatest advantage to regale the eyes of the passengers as they went along the street, a couple of crossed arm bones, like the *memento mori* of a tombstone. This singular ornament of a barber's shop had, we believe, its origin in the civil wars, when broken limbs and broken heads being more plenty than sound ones, and not doctors enough to be found to mend them, the barbers took upon themselves, in a regular way, the trade of what was called bone-setters. A choice set of old teeth, also, shewed Trim operated about the mouth in more ways than one, and could extract a grinder as well as curl a mustachio. Combs, scissors, and razors were but the more ordinary adornments of his shop windows; as first and foremost appeared sundry phials, boxes, and round-bellied bottles, each containing some precious drug or elixir pertaining to the healing craft, and set forth with all the importance such things required. There might be seen extract of pearl, aurum potabile, confection of amber, bezoar stone, rosa solis, and compound waters, etc. etc., with many other precious and costly drugs then held as essential in the practice of medicine, but which have long since disappeared from our more improved and modern pharmacopœia. A table, a smooth-worn high-backed chair, with two or three stools, and a settle in the chimney nook, constituted the furniture of the apartment; not forgetting a birding gun and a brace of old petronels that hung above the heavy stone chimney piece, more, perhaps, for ostentation than use.

But one thing more demands our notice in this curious medley; it was a certain dark, old fashioned, corner-cupboard:

this, if report spoke truth, was said to contain many things pertaining to the black art, in which it was shrewdly suspected Trim had been a dabbler; for now and then, on the door being left a-jar, some curious eyes would peep in, and beheld, it was averred, sundry parchment books, brown, and worn in the covers; certain scrawled papers, whose signs looked like those of the zodiac in caricature; several large-bellied glass bottles, with a child in pickle in one of them, a knot of twisted snakes in another, and the body of a young alligator in a third. Few of Trim's customers, who had ever once seen these things, felt disposed for a second peep; and some malicious persons were wicked enough to say, that he rather winked at than discouraged this curious spirit of prying into his secrets, from a consciousness that such evidence of his being a proficient in the occult sciences could not fail to increase the reverence in which he was already held by all admiring gossips and friends. A man's pursuits generally convey a pretty good idea of his character, except in those cases where nature and habit are determined to be at variance. In Trim Foretop, however, the one did not contradict the other; and we have said so much of his business, his dwelling, and its appurtenances, that little remains to be said of himself. He was a light, thin, active person, not juvenile nor yet old; had a busy bustling air, that seemed to put every one about him into motion, and to make ten times as much fuss about doing the slightest, or the greatest thing, as it required. He busied himself for all his friends, and with everybody's affairs, but his own; and those, with the true regal mode of government, he left to be managed by his prime minister; or, in other words, by his wife, who, like most ministers in office, felt no inclination to resign, and kept the reins, when she had them, with a tight managing hand, though not without occasional murmurings that her husband would sometimes start wide away from her control.

In one thing, however, Trim and his wife perfectly agreed, and that was in thinking themselves to be great politicians, though they did not exactly adopt the same line in their political conduct to the customers. The lady, for example, was a most uncompromising royalist; whilst Trim, though he had a leaning that way in his heart, used more prudence in his behaviour; for, wisely considering that if cavaliers must have their beards peaked and their locks curled, roundheads must be close cropped and shaved, he could manage, without any violent opposition of conscience, to keep on civil terms with both parties; as Trim most truly observed, that loyalty, though a very excellent thing, would neither make his pot boil, nor

put on his ears again, if he chanced to lose them in the pillory by meddling with politics in opposition to the powers that were uppermost in those dangerous times.

Let not our readers suppose, because we say this, that Trim was, therefore, hard upon, or even shy of, the cavaliers. Far from it: he was shy of none but publicly suspected persons; and anybody, king's man or parliamentarian, who came to his shop in a civil way to get shaved, was welcome to hear the news; to a seat under the stone porch, or on the settle in the chimney corner, or even to a cup of ale on extraordinary occasions; and so long as there was present no sharking attorney (on the look out for malignants), he might talk politics, if he liked it, till he could adjust the affairs of the nation, or re-establish the church; and Trim would never say a word to check it. An apprentice boy and a little parish girl completed Trim's family, save the lodger, who must not here be forgotten, as he will be found a person of some importance in the progress of our drama.

Captain Coleman, for such was his name, answered exceedingly well, in his outward appearance, to that description which Falstaff gives of Justice Shallow—"He was, for all the world, like a man made after supper of a cheese-paring, or like a forked radish, with a head fantastically carved upon it with a knife." The Captain's legs moreover were so curiously curved, that most people would have fancied him naturally bandy-legged; but that he (who had a ready way of referring all things, even his very defects, to his military career) declared that the constant habit of sticking fast to the saddle, and managing a high-spirited charger by the pressure of his knees, had at last produced this form of limb, which he considered to be one most advantageous, and much to be desired by all riders in a troop.

His arms, when he moved, swung about like the sails of a windmill; and he walked and managed his cloak with a ruffling air, like one not unacquainted with the swaggering gait practised by the gallants of the day, who haunted Turnbull Street, or the Garden of Piccadilly.* His nose was hawked, and of considerable dimensions; a long chin, lank cheeks, black hair, a fierce glance, with upturned mustachios, and a pair of eyebrows that at a little distance looked as if they were made with a burnt cork; a drunkard's eye, red, watery, and given to blinking, all helped to render remarkable the outward figure of the gallant Captain Coleman. He

* In the times of Charles the First, Piccadilly was a house noted for gambling, having gardens used for games of an illegal and disreputable nature.

had held the king's commission in the dissolute and abandoned troop of Sir Richard Grenville; a leader in every way worthy of his men. To account for the Captain's being at liberty after his General, Sir Richard, had decamped to France, we have only to state that all the world said he had taken the covenant. Now, possibly this might not be true, for he still talked big respecting his loyalty; and more especially in moments when there was no great fear that doing so would turn to his prejudice; and at all events it must be confessed, that of the two, he really liked the king better than the parliament.

He remembered, with sincere pleasure, the service he had seen in Grenville's army, with all its charming license and adventures; such as knocking Roundheads on the head, storming and pillaging towns, exacting fines and free quarters, and other such petty benefits of war as "jumped with his humour." The Captain, who ever retained, like the noted Captain in the play, a great value for his title, thinking, perhaps, as did that worthy, that it was an excellent "travelling name," felt ever jealous of being called by any other appellation.

For his dress, it was slovenly, and not over clean; yet it retained a touch of finery that spoke some vanity in the wearer. His cloak was scarlet, dingy, and full of stains; yet laden with faded lace; and his coat was so covered with clinquante (a sort of tinsel imitating a more costly ornament) that scarce could the ground of it be seen. All his clothes smelt of tobacco; so that he wafted along with him a gale of that perfume wherever he came; and for his mouth, it breathed forth fumes of old sack and Jamaica rum, as fast as he opened his lips. His jacket boots, with iron-shod heels, gave a noisy consequence to his step; a thing of some value to men who, like our Captain, feel their own importance to be of doubtful admission, and who would therefore consider nothing as insignificant which helped to give an air to that personal audacity they would endeavour to make pass current for the bold bearing of brave and daring men. A long tuck hung by his side; a collar of Flanders lace, many times darned, yet still ragged, shewed, as the Captain thought, something courtly; and a black velvet bonnet (with a single white plume, that nodded over the left shoulder), set knowingly on the head, gave the finishing air to the whole man designated by the name of the Captain; and who, whilst in command, was so zealous in his duty, that if his men were false or true, royalists or ragamuffins, he was nothing nice about them, so long as they knew well how to pillage a town after a siege, and to let a good share of the spoil find its way to his quarters.

Having said thus much of Mistress Foretop's lodger, we shall at present only add that at the time we introduce him to our reader, Captain Coleman had walked out of his own particular little cabin into the shop; that being the place of general rendezvous for news, company, and customers, in Trim's house. His coming, like that of many other great personages, sent forth a fragrant announcement before him, though not one of musk or roses; but the rolling vapours of a new-lighted pipe, that scented all the house, first made Mistress Foretop sensible of the approach of her lodger.

She had her own reasons for being most exceedingly civil; as, on this morning, the Captain had promised to pay her a certain account of moneys due some time ago; and though he had hitherto been pretty regular in such matters, yet in the present instance he he was very much behindhand. How the Captain lived (that is to say, whence arose his means) was a circumstance Mistress Foretop could not exactly tell, not being wholly admitted to his confidence. But as she very justly observed to any gossiping neighbour who might be curious on the subject, so long as he paid her as an honest man ought to do, it was no business of hers; the Captain might have his own reasons for being silent about his means; and, perhaps, might not at all times know exactly what they were himself.

As he now advanced into the shop, it struck Mistress Foretop that he did not come quite so well prepared as she had expected; since the consciousness of being about to pay a bill generally gives a man a certain air of consequence, which makes him, for the time at least, feel superior to the person he is to oblige. There was in the Captain, on the contrary, which Mistress Foretop in a moment detected, a certain shuffling air; a desire to evade the subject, and more civility in his manner than was usual with a gentleman of so much importance. Quite convinced by these signs, that no money was forthcoming, Mistress Foretop felt that she had now the right to play the dignified character, and might be as uncivil as she pleased without the fear of offending. To a very kind question, therefore, as to where her husband might be gone this morning, she anwered in a manner full of meaning—"Gone! why in good sooth gone out, to attend some small matters of business in the way of his craft; where, I trow, he is like to get paid for it; and not to receive promises instead of pence, as some people do; and who, may be, are like enough to get paid after the fashion your old general, Sir Richard Grenville, observed when he paid his dues to the Keeper of the Fleet."

"Why, how say you, did he pay, good woman?" said the Captain, sulkily.

"How did he pay!" re-echoed Mistress Foretop: "why, marry, in the same way that, very likely, you intend to pay me if I let you—by giving leg bail, and shewing a good pair of heels on the first opportunity. He ran clean away."

The Captain took his pipe out of his mouth, and smiled, as well as his black visage would allow him to smile, as he said in a tone of cajolery, "You do but jest, I see, this morning: for well do you know that my singular good affection to you and to your husband would not suffer me, as a gentleman of honour, to shew cutter's law in your house. Nay, cheer up, my good dame! Hang me, if such a buxom face as thine was made for scolding,—it looks as handsome as the Queen's, when her Majesty is in her sweetest humour. Come, Dame, never flout for a matter of some twenty shillings, seeing that death and quarter-day are the only two things certain in this world; and my quarter-day depends upon contingencies, and comes not always, I grant you, with the almanac,—but come, it must. Look up then, good Dame, and I swear by all that is most dear to honour—my reputation as a soldier—that I will pay thee as soon as my Irish remittances come in; and give thee the cherry-coloured gown thou didst so much covet in old Abraham the pedlar's pack."

"Thy Irish remittances!" cried Mistress Foretop: "Good lack! I never thought thou hadst any estate over seas."

"O yes," said the Captain, "all my estates are over seas; and thence comes it, that in consequence of these unruly times, with the uncertainty of winds and frequent loss of shipping, my supplies are not always so regular as my wants; for a man must eat, drink, and sleep, you know, if the means to do so come to him or not."

"But not at an honest woman's cost, I trow," said Mistress Foretop, who, though somewhat soothed by the Captain's manner, had still a longing eye after the payment of her bill; "thou didst promise I should have my own on this very blessed morning, or I am no true woman."

"A true woman thou art, Mistress Foretop," said the Captain; "for thou dost never lack wit; though some, less just to thy merits, will say thou dost best prove thy womanhood by never lacking tongue. But a true woman thou art, and a fair woman, and a kind woman, and thou wilt lend me a crown this very blessed morning, till I can pay all in a lump, if it were only out of remembrance to my misfortunes; knowing that my somewhat diminished means are the consequence of my sufferings in the cause of the King of England, France, Scotland, and Ireland to boot."

"In the cause of the king of hearts, clubs, diamonds, and spades to boot, you mean," said Mistress Foretop, "till a spade will at last be handled for you; for a churchyard or a gallows will be the end of it, and of all such ways as you follow: for if you dice it, and card it, and racket it, and ruffle it, as I have heard tell you do, what will it all come to, but to bring down yourself to debt, beggary, and starving, and an early old age, and a quick going out, like a candle that is burnt at both ends, as I may say. There's no trusting to your word; and I'll have some better assurance for my security before I lend you another crown."

"Thou shalt, sweetheart," said the Captain, "and such assurance as cannot be doubted; for I will call in no security but thyself, and sign and seal on thy own red lips, that are more precious than rubies, and more sweet than sugar or sugared sack." And, so saying, the Captain very heartily saluted his landlady.

"Well now, I declare," said Mistress Foretop, wiping her mouth with her apron, and pulling straight her cap that was somewhat disordered by this kiss of peace, "you are a strange man, and have such taking ways with you, that if my husband didn't know he had the best of wives, it were enough to put tantrums into his head. But it 's the way with all you captains of troop-horse, when you get about us women; there's no being honest for you without one's as old and as ugly as a witch."

"Then art thou the greatest of rogues," said the Captain in a wheedling tone; "for if a good buxom presence, with a blithe eye and a merry song, be as rocks and shoals to make shipwreck of woman's honesty, thou art lost, good dame, already, were it only for the sin of thy temptations. Thou wilt lend me a crown? a crown for the sake of pity and of thy blue eye, that pity so becomes; a crown for the sake of him who loves thee; a crown to warm his heart, though in affliction, for a good cause; a crown for the honour of England's king, that a cup may not be lacking to drink a health to our Charles?"

"I'll give a crown to supply such a cup with all my heart," said a voice; and looking round, the wheedling captain beheld Cornet Davy, who had that moment stepped into the shop.

"A fair offer should never be refused," said the Captain: "honest friend, lend me the money, and we'll crush a cup together this morning with as light a heart as if we were kings."

"Nay, with a much lighter, I trust, than one king hath at

least," said the Cornet with a sigh. "Take a crown: here it is, for I scorn to be worse than my word; though words are sometimes hastily set down, like random guesses at an account, but I must not stay to take shares now in the cup, for my business is very solemn and very pressing."

"I dare say it is," said the Captain, "something like my own this morning; the early part of the day being ever the best for settling accounts, or giving securities. But sit you down, honest friend, and I will order the 'prentice lad to run and bring us a cup of muscadine from the King's Head; that is, the King's Head that was; for, as I hear, the Roundheads have pulled down the sign, and set up old Noll's in its place."

Cornet Davy shook his head at the hearing of so ill an omen. "I trust it may never go farther than a sign," he said: "but this disrespect to the royal image of his Majesty, that used to hang out as an invitation to gladden the hearts of his subjects within, is no good sign how the original may be treated if the worst comes of it to the royalists; for those who are so ready to pull down but the semblance of a king's head would not scruple to take off the head itself on the first opportunity."

Captain Coleman soon obtained the muscadine; as the Cornet made known his errand, and was informed he must wait till the barber-surgeon, whose attendance was required, might be returned from his morning duties out of doors, Mistress Foretop, the Captain, and Davy, sat down very lovingly together to partake of the cheering cup, seasoned by the remains of a pasty that the liberality of the landlady had supplied as a morning repast for the company.

Politics (that favourite theme of the day, and of all Englishmen, for they are a thinking and therefore a political nation,) supplied a subject for discourse; and though each party considered himself or herself as fully competent to guide the council of state, yet possibly our readers might hold their opinions in less estimation: we shall, therefore, pass in silence their discourse on these topics, and merely observe that Cornet Davy, on hearing the Captain's name, seemed suddenly to recollect him; and said in a very grave tone of voice, "I believe, Captain, notwithstanding what I have this morning both seen and heard to make me think well of your loyalty, that I am mistaken. I rather suspect that you are one of those who, wishing to escape all pains and penalties for having borne arms for King Charles, took the covenant so soon as the parliament and Fairfax turned the balance in their own favour in the west."

"Worthy brother in arms," said the Captain, "you do me wrong, exceeding wrong; and, rather trusting to envious report, which ever slanders merit, than to the credit due to a gentleman of honour, you have swallowed greedily the first tale circulated to my disadvantage, and to the manifest injury of those principles of loyalty, for which I have suffered both in body, mind, and estate."

"You did not take the covenant then?" said Cornet Davy.

"You shall hear," replied Captain Coleman. "After Fairfax beat us by numbers, nothing but by numbers—for you know there's no withstanding odds, though one be as valiant as Hercules—I was held in durance; and being considered a very dangerous and determined man, from my many acts of singular loyalty and valour—I claim no merit in them, valour being but my nature, not at all a thing of choice; for it is choice which constitutes the merit of any action—I was, as I may say, become, even in name, very terrible to the enemy: so that in order to confine the red dragon, for so I think the puritan rascals called me——"

"Very like," said the Cornet; "the red dragon means the devil, and is talked of in Revelations. Grenville's troopers were often thought to merit the name."

"I say," continued the Captain, "that Fairfax and Waller became jealous of my fame, as well as of my principles; and so it was determined to send me on board the ships, or into Turkish slavery, unless I would take the covenant, which I, of course, most resolutely refused."

"And how came it, then, that you got off at last?" said the Cornet.

"Why, a certain friend of mine, who knew I was not to be wrought upon, but would die a martyr to the cause, happened to be one of the sequestrators or committee-men: so he came to me, under pretence, as it were, that we might sit together, and crush an honest cup, as a cheering to my captivity; and whilst we did so, he gave a paper into my hands, and bade me put it into my pocket, and take charge of it for him till his return, some sudden affair of business obliging him to leave me. I complied with his request without examining the paper. In the mean while he went to the proper authorities, and having solemnly attested he had seen me take the covenant, I was presently discharged, and never suspected the trick till liberty was my own. I own to you that then I thought virtue did not require me to step forward and contradict the good effects of so friendly an artifice; not doubting that the day would come when I should be sought for by some of our

old cavaliers, in the same way that seamen look for the polar star to guide them in safety through perils."

Scarcely had the Captain finished this account of his taking the covenant, which, true or false, was his usual apology with royalists for having taken it at all, when a new comer, of a very different order, arrived; and Mistress Foretop hastened to greet her new guest, who was one of her own sex, with much kindness, bidding her a hearty welcome, and calling her by the name of Widow Raleigh.

CHAPTER XIII.

But still his tongue ran on, the less
Of weight it bore, with greater ease;
And with its everlasting clack,
Set all men's ears upon the rack.
BUTLER'S *Hudibras*.

THE Widow Raleigh was a most interesting woman. She was not young, being more than forty years old; and though she had never, probably, possessed much beauty, still there was that expression of sense, of benevolence, of quiet and subdued feeling about her countenance, which created respect as well as goodwill in all who beheld her. She was attired in widow's weeds, with a cap so white, that in contrast with the more gay but less nice attire of Mistress Foretop it looked like driven snow. Yet with all her attention to propriety, it was evident by the threadbare state of her clothes, and a certain pale look, with a hollowness about the eyes (sure indications of necessity), that the Widow Raleigh was very poor. She apologised to Mistress Foretop for calling in to rest herself, as she complained of being fatigued, and of having to walk home as far as Tamerton by herself, unless she should be so fortunate as to meet some neighbour returning from market, who would give her a lift behind him on his horse.

"And that's what I hope you may, with all my heart," replied Mistress Foretop; "for it's no safe thing for a lone woman, and a gentlewoman too, like you, Mistress Raleigh, to be going about the country by yourself in these times: and I have heard tell, you were to be sure to come this morning into Plymouth to receive forty shillings so long owing to you from James Gray the hellier, owing even in your late husband, honest gentleman's time, as I may say; and so I hope you've got the money."

Mistress Raleigh, though less communicative than Mistress Foretop, had no apprehension in answering the question, and therefore allowed she had received it.

"Well, now," exclaimed the barber's wife, "that is as it should be: promise and pay is all fair play, and that's giving a smooth word and keeping it; for call me cousin but cozen me not, as the proverb goes, is what I like well, and not such palavering and giving of promises, as if, like pie-crust, they were only made to be broken." Here Mistress Foretop gave

a side glance at the Captain; but he was one of those who never understood a hint, unless it suited his convenience so to do. Replenishing, therefore, his pipe from a huge box which he carried about him, that was as full of tobacco as a modern dandy's would be of snuff, he whiffed on, nothing abashed by these petty sallies of irritability, in consequence of his failure in paying his bill.

Now whether he was struck with compassion by observing the melancholy countenance and the helpless condition of Mistress Raleigh, or whether he had an "itching palm" to appropriate to himself any part of the forty shillings just mentioned, we cannot say; but certain it is, that a very gallant project at this moment entered his head, which he thus hastened to communicate:—

"I have been thinking, Master Davy," he said, taking the pipe out of his mouth, and turning round to the Cornet, "that it would be a pity this honest gentlewoman should, at the risk of much bodily fatigue, and probable loss of her charge, have to walk home all the way to Tamerton. I have heard that Sir Hugh Piper keeps an old, but stout, troop-horse, that he rode whilst under command of Sir Bevil Grenville, at Lansdown fight. The horse is called Hector, I believe. Now, would Sir Hugh lend him for such a purpose, we could speedily equip the old charger with a saddle and pillion, and I would gladly take the gentlewoman home, and return safely with the horse before the moon is up to-night; and as for thieves, footpads, discarded soldiers, liberated prisoners, highwaymen, or cut-purses, let them come—one and all—the widow is under my guard, and she shall see how we captains of horse settle such fellows. Why I would cut them up by dozens, as you, Mistress Foretop, would cut up minced pies."

"Now as I am a true woman," said Mistress Foretop, "that's a very civil and officer-like proposal of the Captain's; and I counsel you, Mistress Raleigh, never to refuse a good offer, for it mayn't come a second time; and it's not safe for you to go home alone with that money about you, for even hedges have eyes, as the saying is, and walls have ears, where such things are at hand."

The Widow Raleigh, far from rejoicing at the proposal of the gallant captain, seemed a good deal embarrassed by it, yet thanked him civilly; but after many efforts, and some hesitation, as if not knowing what to say, she assured Mistress Foretop she did not doubt doing very well, as she knew many of the farmers, who would very likely be returning home, and would gladly give her assistance.

"No, no, don't you trust to that," said Mistress Foretop,

"a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush; and to be sure, Mistress Raleigh, for a gentlewoman like you, who knows reading, and writing, and breeding, and needlework, and all those sort of things, and a clergyman's widow into the bargain, where could you find a more properer man to see you home than a handsome captain of troop-horse? That is, a captain that was, but once a captain always a captain, is, you know, captain's law all over the world. And I don't doubt but that you'll trot along as comfortably together as if you'd known each other these seven years. And though I say it before his face, as I would ahind his back, you'll find the Captain a very pleasant man; that is, when he is sober, as he is now; for he's apt to be a little rash and phlematic (probably meaning splenetic) when he's taken a cup or so too much. And who knows what may come of it?" added Mistress Foretop with a giggle; "for they say women are witching things, and as your first husband wore a black coat, I dare say you'd have no objection to your second wearing a red one, he! he! he!"

This sort of jesting did not seem to be at all relished by poor Mistress Raleigh; who, anxious to turn the conversation, and yet not to give offence where real kindness might be intended, however vulgarly or coarsely expressed, said, "she was much obliged, but she could not think of taking Sir Hugh Piper's horse for her service, without going to ask his leave, and she could not be so bold as to do that."

Cornet Davy heard this; and as the good man knew nothing of that refined practice of gentlemen and ladies, in expressing a negative by excuses only, he took the widow's objections in their most literal sense. Unwilling, therefore, to pain Mistress Raleigh, he thought to do her a service by saying, "Honoured madam, I can save you that trouble; for my worthy master's old horse, Hector, is at all times at my command; and if I neglected such an opportunity as this offers, to use the beast for the help of the widow, and, as I may say, of the fatherless also (for I think I have heard you have a pretty little puppet of a girl), why, I repeat, my master would never forgive me; since he says it is always one part of my duty, as his managing clerk, not to let anything stand still: I must not, therefore, let his horse stand still, when there is reason good to put him in motion. I'm going home, to Dame Sibella's, on a message, the moment after I've seen Master Barber; for my master, Sir Hugh, stays to-day at Mount Edgcumbe. And I'll bring down the horse for you as soon as the boy gets him in from the field."

Exceedingly vexed at this arrangement, the Widow Raleigh was going to put forth her plain and positive denial, when a circumstance arose which induced her to alter her mind.

At this moment a person entered the shop to inquire if "Master Barber might yet be returned home," who was, both in appearance and character, very different from any of the other gossips now assembled. This new comer was a little, pale-faced, meagre mechanic, a leather-cutter and glove-maker by trade. He had a small pair of sharp, piercing eyes; wore a suit of coarse drab and an apron; had his hair close cut, with an old black cap on the crown of his head, and affected that stiff, solemn, lack-a-daisical air so much in fashion with the godly.

Tim Glover, for such was his name, expressed himself in no haste to take his immediate departure, as he wanted to see the barber, and did not, therefore, altogether refuse Mistress Foretop's invitation that he would sit down and sip a cup of small beer, which she had set upon the table, as a humble companion to the more costly muscadine; for she well remembered that she was cautioned to be civil to everybody by her husband; and though her tongue would sometimes go beyond bounds in the emotions excited by her loyalty, yet she could, on most occasions, keep on pretty smooth terms even with her political adversaries.

Scarcely had Tim Glover dropt into his chair, when the Captain, who, being tall himself, held all little people in contempt (and unfortunately for little people, they can seldom possess much dignity, so entirely does dignity depend on magnitude of body as well as of mind), turned about, and said, with an insolent air, "What news, my great man of little compass? What news may be stirring this morning? You look as if you had found out it is wit to steal a horse or pick a lock, but it is wisdom to let it alone. What news? How wags the world? Are the godly turned honest, or are halters become dear, that so many of them go abroad unhanged? And where is your Mars of the day, General Cromwell?"

"Working wonders in the land of Ham," replied the little glover.

"In the land of beef and pudding, you mean," said the Captain: "why, what sort of a land would your psalm-singing generals make of Old England? where, to the amusement of all our neighbours, you would set up even an army of troopers, call a muster-roll, or regulate a drill, as if, forsooth, all things were to be done after the fashion of wanderers in the land of Egypt! I marvel where this will end, and when a gentleman may hope again to get into commission."

"There's good opportunity," replied the little man, "both for gentle and simple, who are well disposed; for, as I hear,

for the sake of peace, liberty of conscience, or the old laws, new making by the Commons of England as fast as they can. But it's all very right, all very right, and a great help to trade: for the civil wars have been the making of barber-surgeons and otherwise; likewise of gaol-keepers, lawyers, and gentleman of the committees. What, Captain, going to see Mistress Raleigh home! on the back of an old troop-horse! Ha, ha, well, well, better she be made to ride that way than riding to water; but Mistress Raleigh need not fear the latter, since it is reserved for a scold.* I'm coming, I'm coming, in the prick of a lancet, or the flourish of a razor. Can't stay to shave you, Master Glover; can't, upon my veracity; my wife will do it for you quite as well; for she can cut close, Master Glover; sharp and close as any razor when she uses her tongue: and yet—O yes, I know it, my dear Mistress Foretop; I understand what you would say; you're as sweet as a May morning when you are pleased and in good humour. And now you're all satisfied, hear my news!"

The Cornet shewed signs of impatience.

"You can't stay for it? O yes, you can; for I must just look out some necessary things to take with me to Mount Edgcumbe. Just a small matter of confection of *amber*, some *rosa solis*, and a little *aurum potabile*, and my best lancet, and my sharpest razor; for as you say that the shipwrecked man is dangerously hurt, very like I may want both—my lancet to breathe a vein in him, if he lives; or my razor for shaving the corpse, if he be dead: that 's what I call doing business; always being ready for occasion and any possible opportunity. That 's the way half the great men rise in the world; for none but General Cromwell can hope to get on by a self-denying ordinance; ha, ha, ha! excuse my wit; but a good joke is half my stock in trade—always keeps customers pleasant, and in good humour—and now for my news!"

"Let it be brief, I beg of you," said the Cornet: "give us the sum total without the items, else will Sir Hugh think I delay. I pray, be brief."

"Ay, brief as a sentence of Sir Richard Grenville's," replied the barber, "who used to say to a prisoner, 'Go hang,' and it was done at once, and then he took note for the trial; whence comes the saying of Lydford law.—You 've heard Master Browne the Devonshire poet's lines about the Gubbins's and Lydford law, I dare say, Master Cornet? else could I repeat them to you. But let me see, now for my news; and first of

*Riding to water, a custom practised within the memory of some now living in Devonshire, was the same thing as riding the *skimmington*, noticed in Hudibras.

all I must sharpen this razor, and tell you the whole story about Browne the poet, and Lydford law, as I do it."

There never was barber since the days of the noted chattering barber in the story of little Hunchback so tormenting as this was: for, whereas the Arabian took out his astrolabe to see what it was o'clock, and both sung the song, and danced the dance of Zantout, when he should have been shaving an impatient lover, even so did our barber take out no astrolabe (when he should have been waiting on Cornet Davy), but some half dozen of razors more than necessary, and would sharpen them, and spend his time in useless bustle and preparation; and would tell (with all its windings and digressions) the story about the wild race of the Gubbins's, the origin of the saying of Lydford law, and finally, reverted to telling his own news, whilst the old Cornet sat upon thorns to get him off to do his errand at Mount Edgcumbe.

"I 'm going, I 'm going directly," said the barber. "I have only one thing more to tell, and that shall be in five words—we shall have the devil to pay next Sunday."

Tim Glover groaned. "Pay not Satan's hire on the seventh day," he said, "or the ground will open and swallow you up alive; for if to pick sticks on the Sabbath was a sin worthy death under the old law, what must he incur who pays devil's wages on that self-same day under the new law?"

"Why for the matter of that," cried the Captain, "I am so far a theologian as to say that to give the devil his due at any time is fair play and good doctrine. But come Trim, thy news; and as the king says to the stage player in Hamlet, leave thy damnable faces and begin."

"I will," said Trim, "I will. Know all men—for such are the very words, I saw it in a printed bill with my own eyes—know all men that our Sovereign Lord the King, Charles, of blessed memory—no, that wasn't it, for King Charles is still alive in this world—may he be so for ever!"

"What! like the wandering Jew?" said the Captain.

"No, no, not that, don't put me out," said Trim, "that our Sovereign Lord the King, as well as his late father, of blessed memory—ay, there I'm right — his late father, of blessed memory — published a declaration authorising lawful sports and pastimes on the Sabbath-day, the same being much opposed, and discountenanced altogether, and forbidden by the parliament. Sundry knights, gentlemen, yeomen, freemen, and others of this county, are determined, for the good of their bodies as well as of their souls, and to maintain the ancient manly sports, exercises, and pastimes of this kingdom, to revive the same; and, for such purpose, on Sunday next, at Tamer-

ton Foliot, it is the intention of all such as shall be well, merrily, and peaceably disposed, to come armed with bats, clubs, sticks, bludgeons, and what not, to keep in all its ancient honours, rights, and usages, REVEL SUNDAY, to wrestle, frolic, pitch the bar, play nine men's morrice, shittlecock, and draw a good bow, such as can; and to dance and wrestle, sing, and drink a cup of brown ale, as Englishmen ought to do, in spite of all the Cromwells and Iretons, and all the preachers and parliaments that have, may, can, or shall attempt to oppose them—and, I say, the day ends to my profit and I must be stirring, for broken heads will roll about as plenty as nine pins."

Tim Glover groaned and turned up his eyes.

"Well, I declare I'll go," said Mistress Foretop; "for I like to see a little pleasure, now and then, in a decent way."

"And if there is like to be danger I must be there; or Bellona would not know her own field," said the Captain. "Mistress Foretop, I'm at your service for the day."

"'Tis thought," said Trim, "that Ruthen's troopers will attempt to stop the revel; but there's the king's command to bear them out in the lawfulness of the sports, and as long as England has a king I have heard that is good law."

"His kingdom is past away," said Tim Glover, "for he is in bondage, and his crown is like to be given over as a spoil."

"Is it?" said Mistress Foretop, reddening with fury: "then I say, and I don't care who hears me, that I hope to live to see the day he may have his own again, and be seen walking in Windsor Castle with a lion on one side of him, and a unicorn on the other, as a great king of England ought to do, in his own palace, and among his own people."

And so saying, with an air of great dignity Mistress Foretop flounced out of the shop to attend to some household duty, and the Cornet, promising to send the horse for Mistress Raleigh, set off for Dame Sibella's as Trim did for Mount Edgcumbe.

CHAPTER XIV.

And after all came life, and lastly death—
Death with most grim and griesley visage seen;
Yet he is naught but parting of the breath,
He ought to see, but like a shade to weene,
Unbodied, unsoul'd, unheard, unseen.

SPENSER'S *Faery Queene.*

THE death of Grace-on-high Gabriel, which took place soon after Cornet Davy had set out in quest of Trim Foretop to bleed the sick man, changed the nature of the honest barber's visit to Mount Edgcumbe; who, instead of letting blood on a living subject, now shaved a dead one, received the customary fee, and having drunk what was called a "dole cup" of excellent waters, returned home, well satisfied with his labours and their reward. Trim, having thus performed his duty to the defunct, left the ground free for the more active agency of the women, who were at all times the privileged attendants of the dead.

Whilst these things were going forward, young Radcliffe made all necessary preparation for quitting the house that had given him such timely shelter in the hour of distress. And having requested the steward of Sir Piers to give orders respecting the funeral of his late servant—which was to take place on the third day after his death—Radcliffe fixed his own departure for the following morning. He determined to go at once to Warleigh; for even if no other motive existed to lead him thither, he fancied Gabriel's death obliged him to return; as that unfortunate man having lived for more than twenty years with Radcliffe's godfather and guardian, Sir John Copplestone, and having, he believed, no other friend or connection in the world, it was right Sir John should know what had passed. These arrangements being made, we must leave him, whilst we return to the chamber of death.

It was towards the evening of the day on which Gabriel died, that Dame Gee, whose vocation led her much to scenes of gloom and awe, was busied about the body; aided by Nanny Raffles, the old woman we noticed in a former chapter, as acting the part of an inferior nurse under the high rule of the dame. This great mistress of arts (both visible and invisible, useful and terrific), with her assistant, at the time we open

this chapter, were, according to the customs of Devon (to this day not entirely extinct), occupied in what was called "dressing the clay"—that is, decking the corpse; which was laid out on the bed with various flowers, rosemary, etc. The following conversation took place between the two women:—

"Nanny," said Dame Gee, "this is watching night; has the housekeeper sent up the stoup of juniper waters and the horn spoon?"

"The juniper and the horn spoon are both here," replied the old crone; "but sure you'll not be so bold as to stir the powdered elder leaves with it, till the dogs begin to howl, and the dead man is done dressing? It's no good charm, dame, I take it, without you mind such signs; and if you miss one of them, the browny* will come up, and scat you with your own stick though it be of shrew ash, for a half-done charm is the death of him: it will let him have no peace, and gives him as great pains as he does us when we offend him, and he sends us the rheumatics."

"The browny, you old fool!" replied Dame Gee in a very unceremonious manner; "what talk you of the browny! he fears me more than I do him; for if he fails me at a pinch, I can split an elm tree, and wedge him in, as closely as they do in the north of Devon a field mouse that has run over a sheep's back and made the animal paralytic. Give me those bundles of rosemary, and the ivy twigs, and the bay."

Old Nanny Raffles obeyed; and as Dame Gee continued her death service of decoration, her companion observed, "Well now, I declare that's well done. There's nobody between this and Brent-tor that can stretch and dress a body like you. He looks as pretty a corpse as Tom Nightshade; young Nightshade's old father, that you dressed, dame, after he was hanged, and as I have heard tell, you lopt off his right hand to make a hand of glory of it."

"Hush," said Dame Gee, "let not the walls hear of that matter. The Gubbins's have the hand now, and a fine hand for them it is. It was dried in the dog days, and it's a candlestick fit to hold a light to the fiend himself, did he need any other than the fire that glimmers forth from his own horns."

"That hand of glory is a fearful thing, as I have heard tell," said Nanny Raffles, her old, grey, and envious eyes twinkling with pleasure as she looked on Dame Gee, whose powers she beheld with emulous admiration, "I would give a crown, if a crown I had to give, to know what it's good for; what's its worth."

* The browny is a western spirit as well as a Scotch one. Borlase says, that in Cornwall, even in his day, the country people invoked the assistance of the browny at the swarming of bees.

"The hand of glory," replied Dame Gee, "is potent as the touch of the ungraved dead. Its worth is to those who are night-breakers of strong doors and rich men's houses. For if a candle be placed in it, made with charmed things, when lighted and suddenly held out, all who behold that hand and that flame shall straight submit themselves in silence to the bold man who bears before him such a torch; they shall become stupid, motionless, dull, void of all spirit; the blood in their bodies shall be turned to ice, and their vital functions become heavier than lead. Now to our business. Have you locked up all the cats in the house, and covered all the looking glasses?"

"The maidens have done it," replied Nanny; "for not one of them would stay in the house with a dead man in it; unless they had been minded to keep off the devils that long both for the soul and body of the departed. As I came up here just now, before you did, I found the old gamekeeper and his wife making a moan for the dead as loud as that of Rizpah, when she was watching the bodies of the slain, as worthy Master Hezekiah Hornbuckle said at the Sabbath preaching." Nanny pronounced these last words with a sigh; for amongst the other qualities of this gossip was that of an inclination to attend the holding-forths of the various sectaries of the time: she had a good memory, and, though so old, could repeat, chapter and verse, after the minister: it was shrewdly thought she would have become a zealous religionist, only that, in order to be such, possibly she might be required to leave off some of those very sins she had "most a mind to," namely, the sins of witchcraft and devilry, in the cultivation of which she seemed to be in a fair way under the auspices of Dame Gee.

"And what did the gamekeeper lament for?" inquired the priestess of the ceremonies.

"He lamented," said Nanny, "that the parliament had put down the soul-bell, as a popish and super-righteous thing; for said the gamekeeper to me, it is a hard case for a dying sinner, since everybody knows the devil can't abide bells, and the sound of the soul-bell kept him off: so the spirit, let out first, was sure to gain the start, and got by it what sportsmen call law; but now the parliament have put it down by acclamation."

"Proclamation you mean, you poor ignorant body," said Dame Gee.

"Well, acclamation or proclamation, it's all one and the same thing in these days. But now, said the gamekeeper to me," continued Nanny—"now that they have put down the soul-bell, I have read in a book, that a man has no more

chance than a hare with the dogs at her throat; for the devil will stand at the bed's-head ready to catch a sinner's spirit the moment he get's loose."

"Leave thy prating about the soul-bell," said Dame Gee, "and light the candles that I have placed on yonder table, that all things may be done decently before the housekeeper comes up; for this night does she come to be touched under my directions."

"Good lack!" exclaimed Nanny Raffles, "for what ill? Hath she a wart, or a tumour, or a wen?"

"She hath some swelling in the throat," said Dame Gee; "but a dead man's hand will cure it, when properly touched under my special directions, or I know no leechcraft. And now light yonder tapers at the end of the room."

"There are seven of them," said Nanny, "an odd number, and a lucky one. For, as the minister said, 'there is much in numbers.' The seventh day was for rest, after making the world: and then there were seven altars built by Balaam, and seven oxen and seven rams were sacrificed upon them; and seven times about the walls of Jericho seven trumpets were blown. And there were seven golden candlesticks, and seven churches in Asia, and ——"

"Seven devils are in thee, woman," said Dame Gee in an angry voice, "that thou standest there preaching instead of doing my bidding. Stay a moment, however; one thing I had forgot. Do not light the candles yet, but come hither, and help me to tie down his thumbs."

The two women now proceeded to perform a rite, which we have heard was practised in some remote parts of the west of England even so recently as during the last century. This was to fold the thumbs of the dead man within the hand; a superstitious rite, supposed to have originated with the Jews; as the thumb, in this position, resembles a character in the Hebrew alphabet, that was anciently used to signify the name of the Almighty; and the thumb, when bearing this similitude, was held to be capable of keeping aloof the power which wicked spirits were at all times so determined to exercise over the dead.

Having accomplished this purpose, Dame Gee said to her assistant, "Now give me the salt, and the dead man's candle."

Old Nanny Raffles immediately brought forward a pewter plate, upon which was piled a heap of salt and a candle. Dame Gee placed the plate upon that side the breast of the deceased containing the heart, and the candle close to his head. It threw upon the latter a strong light, and shewed distinctly all the ghastliness of death. The bandage was still round his

brows, as it had been left by the surgeon after dressing the wounds that occasioned his decease.

Old Nanny gazed upon him. "Now I look on his face by this light," she said, "he reminds me, with that bloody head of his, broken as it is by the hard rocks that knocked the spirit out of him—I say he reminds me of a corpse that I dressed some twenty years agon, when Sir Walter Radcliffe came so strangely by his death. I remember the night when I was sent for by the housekeeper at Warleigh to come up, with as little noise as might be, to stretch a dead man, and make him decent for the pit; and I went, and there was a clutter of business in the house: and I had just made him nice with flowers and rosemary, and had put the pewter dish with the salt on Sir Walter's heart, and a fine corpse he was to see, when old Sir John Copplestone came in; but he was not old then, and he looked ——"

"And how did he look?" said Dame Gee, for the old crone made a pause in her tale.

"Looked!" exclaimed Nanny Raffles, "like the dead man's shroud; and so I told him. 'Do I?' said Sir John; 'why 'tis like enough, for Sir Walter was my friend, and took his hurt in my cause. I wish to know what wounds he has upon him, for to-morrow he will be crowned.'—'Wounds!' quoth I, 'why, wounds that will cry out, and tell ugly tales at the judgment day. He has wounds enough upon him for one man's death, and maybe for two, if all comes to light." With that Sir John Copplestone sighed, and took up a sprig of rosemary, as if he didn't know what he was about; and then he questioned me somewhat, but I didn't hear it plainly, and when I asked him what he said, he made answer with another question,—'What's that salt for; what are you doing with it?'—'Lord, Sir John,' says I, 'don't you know it's the soul salt, that every one puts on a Christian body, to shew that he did not die like the beasts that perish, but has a spirit to be saved as well as to be damned;' and with the hearing of that, Sir John Copplestone fetched another sigh, very like a groan. So I, seeing his grief, said, to cheer him up amain, 'Never fret for the dead, sir, for the dead won't fret for you; and glad should you be to see Sir Walter thus, for there was a hard parting between the body and the spirit; though I, who sat up with him the night afore he died, drew away the pillows from under his head; for I knew if there should happen to be pigeons' feathers in them he would die in strong agonies; and so he did, for all my care; and long before his hour came, well did I know which way he was going; for as I sat up all night, I heard how hard he breathed, and, as if the death-watch told

time to it, it ticked as loud all night as if it had been a mortal dial, agoing and agoing with never a stop. And some do say that old Molly the cook saw his fetch, and that a bay tree in the garden suddenly withered: it was one he had planted when a boy. And as I was a nursing and a watching, as I may be now, there came three distinct raps at the bed's-head, so we all knew there was a summons.'"

Whilst Nanny spoke, a clear, solemn, and loud rap made her start up: "Lord have mercy on us!" she exclaimed, "What is that?"

"What is that, you old fool!" said Dame Gee; "why go and open the door, and see; I will be sworn it is the housekeeper come to be touched; but she is come before her time; we can do nothing till the moon is up and full, and shining as bright as silver. Open the door, I say."

Nanny, somewhat recovered from the startling effects lately produced on her nerves by a rap so mal-à-propos, or rather so truly à-propos to the subject in debate, went and opened the door as she was ordered; and in doing so forgot to conclude the story she had commenced about watching the body of Sir Walter Radcliffe, who had come so fearfully by his death nearly twenty years before.

CHAPTER XV.

These midnight hags,
By force of potent spells, of bloody characters,
And conjurations, horrible to hear,
Call fiends and spectres from the yawning deep,
And set the ministers of hell at work.
ROWE'S *Jane Shore*

IT was the housekeeper who now entered the dismal chamber of death. She felt some reluctance to join in the unhallowed rites to be performed; and much feared, in her own mind, Sir Piers would not quite approve the method of cure she was about to try for her disease. Sir Piers had recommended to her another mode of treatment far more simple, and far less injurious both to body and soul; namely, that she should hang three spiders about her neck, and take a certain elixir three mornings fasting; a mode of cure highly approved by Sir Piers for all glandular swellings, and one set down in his diary by the famous Sir William Ashmole, as having been tried on himself for an ague with the happiest effects.

Now the housekeeper, who considered her master's knowledge and that of Sir William Ashmole's into the bargain, as nothing at all in comparison with the profound skill of Dame Gee, determined to take her own course, though in a quiet way; and so, notwithstanding she kept three ready bottled spiders (the finest and the fattest the housemaids could sweep down from their snug birth amongst the old hangings at Mount Edgcumbe), in order that she might apply them as so many pendant amulets, should occasion, or rather her master, absolutely require its being done, yet she now had stolen up, full of terror and full of faith, to be touched by the dead man, as a certain mode of cure under the auspices of the mistress of charms, spells, and all manner of witchcrafts.

Nothing, however, was to be done till the moon was quite risen and shining in the heavens. But Dame Gee recommended her to sit still, and not to be running about the house at that hour of the evening. So down they all sat together by the embers of a very small fire; for they would not keep a large one on account of the corpse: and the housekeeper thinking a cup of strong waters would be absolutely necessary

to raise the spirits of all parties on such an occasion, she produced from her capacious pocket a little, long-necked, basket-bound bottle, filled up three small drinking horns, and turning her back towards that part of the chamber where stood the bed, that she might not see the body, sipped her liquor in a modest way, for she was temperate even in the midst of her terrors, and waited patiently the expected hour.

The other two, who had each a professional love of death-beds and charnel-houses, were far less nice in their feelings and stronger in their nerves; and they now solaced themselves from the wicker-worked bottle, not at all discommoded, though the dead man, as it were, was staring them full in the face; and, maybe, they would not have relinquished the cup, even had he started up to take shares with them. The awe of funeral decorations did not so far affect their spirits as to tie up their tongues, though it naturally suggested a theme for discourse; and all the various modes of stretching and dressing, and making handsome the dead, as old Nanny called it, was entered upon or discussed with the utmost critical nicety such topics would admit. At last it became a question whether a person who died of a gunshot or of a sword wound made the prettiest corpse. Dame Gee contended for the former, Nanny Raffles for the latter, and at last old Nanny appealed to the housekeeper to settle the debate, by asking her if she remembered the body that lay at Plymouth Castle whilst Sir Piers Edgcumbe was held prisoner there, and what a handsome one it was.

The housekeeper shook her head, and said, with a sigh, "I never think of that time without its bringing to my mind one who was a great sufferer, and who I heard of but this morning; for Trim Foretop told me, the Widow Raleigh had set up her rest at last in a poor mean cottage at Tamerton Foliot."

"The Widow Raleigh!" said Dame Gee: "I have heard something about her; but I scarce know who she is; yet I think I saw her once, and told her more than she wished to hear. Was she not the wife of one of the king's chaplains?"

"Ah, truly," said the housekeeper: "he was Doctor Raleigh, the nephew of the famous Sir Walter Raleigh, who lost his head to please the Spaniards, as everybody said, in the time of King James."

"The more fool he," said old Nanny, "to lose his head to please anybody but his-self.

"He couldn't help it," replied the housekeeper; "for in those days, the same as they do in ours, they never ask a man whether he 's pleased or no before they take off his head. But it's away with him! Tower-Hill, and a shap axe, and off it

goes: and I often sit and think, when I hear of these things, how much easier it is to take off a head than it is to put it on again. Heigho! it 's a wisht thing, after all, to be bloody-minded, as poor Mistress Raleigh did witness, and none more so."

"I wish you would tell us the story about Mistress Raleigh," said Dame Gee; "for though I know well enough what was the end of it, yet I never heard all the particulars."

"I 'll tell them to you with all my heart," replied the housekeeper, "for I like to make myself pleasant among friends. Doctor Raleigh married a gentlewoman born and bred, Widow Raleigh, that now is, and that nobody takes count of. Well, you must know, he stood up for the king, as good cause he had, for King Charles had been a bountiful master to him; and when the rebellion broke out, he was sequestered and hurried from prison to prison, suffering all manner of barbarities. At length he escaped, and went to attend upon his royal master at Oxford. During this time poor Mistress Raleigh was turned out of house and home, till she was so distressed that for two nights she lay in the open fields, and none durst take her in, for it was a parliament and a hanging matter to deal with her; though it had been only for the good of one's own soul out of charity."

"But how did Doctor Raleigh get into trouble again after his escape to Oxford?" inquired Dame Gee.

"You shall hear," said the housekeeper; "his great friend was Sir Marmaduke Elford, who heard of poor Mistress Raleigh's terrible distress; and her husband having been put in a prison where there was the plague, had suffered so much before his escape, that he was too weak to go in search of her himself. Sir Marmaduke, therefore, kindly did it for him, and as I have heard, at the risk of his own life he preserved Mistress Raleigh and her infant girl; who, but for him, must have perished on the open moors: but he searched day and night, till he found and saved her. Sir Marmaduke took her home with her poor baby, and treated both as if they had been his own flesh and blood. The good doctor soon after joined his wife and child, for the king's forces getting the day in the west, enabled him once more to go back to his living; but it did not last long, for my Lord Goring being defeated, and as many thought by his own fault, for he was a very swearing, wicked man, the rebels again got the upper hand."

"I remember Lord Goring very well," said Nanny Raffles, "as well as I do Sir Richard Grenville, for they had both red noses, and would sit and sot over a drum-head when they had no other table."

"Ay, that they would," said the housekeeper: "they ruined the king's affairs in the west; and though I don't like to use ill words, yet I say the devil take both of them."

"I dare say he will in time," said Dame Gee, "for he never loses his own: but go on."

"Doctor Raleigh was with his wife," continued the housekeeper, "when he found himself obliged once more to fly for his life. He sheltered himself in Bridgewater, where he did his duty manfully for the king. He was taken prisoner when the town yielded, and then came sorrow indeed! Confined in Plymouth Castle, a brutal fellow named Barret, became his keeper; and this man would, for money, sometimes let the prisoners out for a while, unknown to the committee under whose direction he acted. Doctor Raleigh gave him no money, may be had none to give. Yet wanting to see his wife, who he heard lay grievously sick, the Doctor applied to the committee for leave to see her."

"And did they deny him?" said Dame Gee.

"They did," replied the housekeeper, "for they feared he was busied in a plot for the king. The unhappy man was, on this denial, imprudent enough to complain, that it was hard he could not go out who asked permission of the committee to do it, when so many of the other prisoners who did so asked leave of no one but Barret, and paid him for gaining it. That villain, on hearing this, vowed he would be the Doctor's ruin; and too soon did he keep his word."

"It is as I have heard, then," said Dame Gee,—"Barret acted from motives of revenge; because the committee, after this discovery, deprived him of these bribes, and took them themselves."

"It was so," replied the housekeeper; "for one day the wretch entered the Doctor's chamber, as he was writing to his wife, and would see the letter. The Doctor refused, and high words rose between them; till Barret, drawing suddenly his sword, he passed it through the body of the unfortunate Raleigh. To tell all the sorrow his death occasioned would be vain; his very enemies looked aghast when they heard of it. But his poor widow, who shall speak her distress?"

"I will," said Dame Gee, "for I witnessed it, and before she heard the worst, as she stood by the holy well, and, in her agony, for she was half frantic with suspense and fear, inquired of the spirit of the water if her husband might be living or not. I saw her look like yonder corpse, as she cast her eyes upon the deep, still pool, that gave no sign, that shewed no change, like the death it thus told."

"But her grief after a while gave her a bold spirit to demand

justice for the deed," said the housekeeper. "She prosecuted Barret for the murder: but the villain's sister swore that Doctor Raleigh struck his murderer first; and so the fellow was acquitted, on the ground of its being an act of self-defence. Yet that false swearer was fearfully punished."

"How punished?" inquired old Nanny.

"Not by the hand of man," said the housekeeper, "for God alone dealt with her. He visited her with a terrible judgment. She was struck in a moment, and became a palsied miserable creature; and as I have heard from those who saw her, her face was so drawn that it was dreadful to look upon her. She died, trembling, railing, and cursing her brother; exclaiming, in her last agony, that Barret had made her damn her own soul, by false swearing before the judges, to save his worthless life. But it 's no use being wicked, for bad things will come to light, do what one may to hide them."

"See!" cried Dame Gee rising, "the moon appears unclouded: look how she shines out from amidst her fleecy clouds, like a bride in white and silver. Now is the hour: we must put out the lights, and then you shall be touched," she continued, turning to the housekeeper: "only have faith, and the cure is certain."

"Must the lights be put out?" said the housekeeper, in a tremulous voice. "I had hoped there was no need for that. I am timorous, and have had the headache all the evening."

"Fear not," said Dame Gee, "no spirit will trouble you whilst I am here; though by the angry look yonder man's brow wears even in death, I doubt not he will walk for many a night after he has been laid in the pit."

"Good heavens!" exclaimed the housekeeper, "don't say such a thing, or I shall never abide coming near him, let alone his touching."

"I tell you once again," said Dame Gee, "that so long as I hold in my hand this wand of shrew ash there is nothing to fear. You are as safe from the spirit in this chamber as you would be if you were now floating out at sea in one of yonder ships on this fine night."

"And if the worst comes of it," said Nanny Raffles, "and the dead man should walk, two clergymen (that is, provided they are real bishop's clergymen, and not gifted tinkers, and such-like godly souls as are preachers, now-a-days, under the parliament), why two clergymen, I say, as I have heard tell, can at any time lay a ghost in the Red Sea, by only talking Latin to it; a tongue your ghost cannot abide for the life of him, no more than he can the Red Sea."

"Peace," said Dame Gee; "what we do, we must do before

the clouds cross over the moon. Now mark me, mistress," she added, addressing herself to the housekeeper, "you must stand by the side of that bed and wash your hands thrice in the moonlight, whilst I say something; and then strike the dead man's hand three times over your neck, and you are cured. You may then quit the chamber; but after this is done, for your life speak not, till you shall have passed the threshold of the door, where I am now going to cast down this sprig of rosemary."

Dame Gee performed this preparatory movement with much solemnity: she returned, like one of the witches in Macbeth, pressing her finger upon her skinny lip in token of silence. The scene was one that would have made no bad subject for the singular and imaginative genius of Egerton, delighting, as it does, in embodying spirits of a visionary world. The corpse was dressed with a variety of flowers—those beautiful objects in creation, that seem so well adapted for man in all the stages of his being. In his infancy, they become the sweetest toys of his innocence; in youth, they image his beauty and his bloom; and in death they are as emblems of his fragile and quickly fading existence; whilst strewn on his grave, by the hand of affection, they become as fresh tokens that the memory of the just is ever sweet and lovely to the soul: how appropriately, therefore, were sprigs of ivy, laurel, rosemary, and bay, placed about the body of the deceased, as signs and symbols of eternity, lest the careless or the thoughtless should be tempted to confound the decay of the spirit with that of its earthly house.

Thus decorated with flowers and evergreens lay Grace-on-high Gabriel; his ashy countenance still shewing by its expression the terrified state in which the soul had quitted the body; though every feature, fixed and rigid, declared the spirit of life was extinct and gone. As Dame Gee extinguished the candles, the moon, whose beams shone directly on the dead man's face, for the bed stood opposite the window, touched each stern feature with a cold and silvery light, and gave to the head, thus imperfectly seen, a shadowy and terrific character, which curdled the very blood of the old housekeeper, as she stood and looked upon it. Her first sensation was extreme fear, and a strong inclination to cry out; but Dame Gee, who probably expected such an alarm, again pressed her finger on her lip to betoken silence.

She now extended her left hand to the trembling housekeeper, holding in the right the formidable ashen wand; and having placed her patient in a proper attitude, as a long stream of moonlight fell upon that part of the bed near which she

stood, thrice, by signs, the mistress of spells motioned to her to use the action of washing her hands in the brilliant but impalpable element of light. She obeyed; when Dame Gee, seizing hold of one of Gabriel's hands, said in a low, hollow tone, as if muttering to herself—"The joints are not stiff: another—near to him in kindred or in kind—another will go soon;" and, taking up the dead hand, thrice with its cold and clammy fingers she touched the trembling housekeeper, as the witch repeated these lines:—

Thrice I touch, and thrice I chill,
Thrice to charm away thy ill;
'Tis done—depart hence free from pain,
Ere the moon grows dark again.

The housekeeper, whose terrors had risen to such a height during the operation of touching, assisted as they had been by the effect of the deep, solemn, and measured tone in which Dame Gee uttered her doggerel, required the assistance of that worthy and her sub-priestess to lead her out of the room. No sooner had she crossed the threshold, than the use of her tongue returning, she employed it to declare, "that not for worlds would she go back again," and appeared in such a state of nervous excitement and alarm, that old Nanny Raffles was obliged to accompany her to her own room, and to procure help, to prevent her fainting, which the housekeeper declared she was about to do in a tolerably articulate voice, for one in such a predicament.

From this circumstance, Dame Gee became installed as the sole watcher of the dead; and having locked the door inside, so as to prevent old Nanny's sudden return, the next thing the artful woman did was to light one of the tapers by the embers of the mouldering fire; and having placed it on a little, ugly, crooked-legged table (that an imaginative person might have looked upon it, till it was fancied into the resemblance of some uncouth elfin attendant, now offering his back to hold a light for the convenience of his mistress), she set about employing herself in the way we shall relate.

She first raised her head, and took one careful survey round the room, not even forgetting the bed, where lay the corpse; and having satisfied her mind that herself and the dead man were the sole occupants of the chamber, whilst the locked door secured her from all intrusion, she snuffed the candle with her fingers; and then, slowly drawing from her pocket a horn case, proceeded to examine its contents, and drew forth several papers. Dame Gee had been in early life a petted attendant of Sir Piers Edgcumbe's mother, who, on account of her quick parts, instructed her favourite in the rare accomplishments

among the poor (for such they were in her day) of reading and writing. Whatever might have been the contents of these papers, they completely absorbed her attention, though, now and then, she raised up her head as she was reading, and gave a glance at the dead man, with something like a look of malicious triumph. She read on undisturbed for some time, till, fancying she heard a noise, with considerable caution she put the papers once more together, and restored them to her own pocket. She now listened attentively, and thought she heard a door softly moved that opened upon a terrace, situated under the window of the chamber where she was watching.

Curiosity on all occasions, whether they might concern herself or not, was no small stimulus in the active nature of Dame Gee: blowing out the light, therefore, she stole to the window, opened the casement as gently as possible, and determined to be satisfied.

The night was still and beautiful, whilst every surrounding object slept, as it were, in the silvery silence of the moonlight; not a breath of air stirred the leaves of the old trees, nor rippled the vast deep. The soft illumination shewed distinctly every object in the distance, and a long stream of light trembled upon the waters of the bay, where floated many an anchoring bark.

As Dame Gee stood listening at the casement, she saw advance from the shade cast by a clump of thick and tall laurel trees, growing near the house, the figure of a man wrapped in a cloak, who seemed to steal cautiously along, as if to avoid observation. At the same time a female form, clothed in white, advanced from the house, and went to meet him. The hour, the place, the apparent caution, the mystery, were all things calculated to raise to its utmost pitch the curiosity of Dame Gee; and stretching her head as forward as she dared do (though from having extinguished the candle there was no danger of her being seen), she scarcely breathed as she listened, so eager was she not to lose the slightest word that might be spoken.

She was, however, doomed to suffer considerable disappointment; for after a few words, probably of greeting, spoken in so low a tone that she heard not one of them, the figures moved slowly off to a part of the terrace far beyond earshot; and where, being within the shadow cast by the spreading branches of the trees that there overhung it, they were less liable to be seen. Some time elapsed ere they again moved; and during this interval Dame Gee maintained her post in patient determination to watch the result. At length they once more approached, and it seemed as if they were about to part, for

they paused under the window near a door that led into the house. Only a few words of a broken sentence could be heard, so as to be understood by Dame Gee, yet she was perfectly well convinced that the discourse was one of deep interest to the parties concerned.

The moon shone so bright that, though she did not see the face, yet nevertheless, Dame Gee felt quite certain the female she now beheld was no other than Mistress Agnes Piper, whose adventures at the fountain, in the morning, with young Elford, she had not forgotten. At first, therefore, she concluded that the male figure who stood talking to her in the moonlight was Elford. But a closer observation of his person, and the tones of his voice, which she now and then caught as they became raised in discourse, soon convinced her it was not Elford. He was of unusual height: this young man was not near so tall; and on looking at him again she strongly suspected, from his size and air, that he was no other than Amias Radcliffe, the young gentleman she had seen but that very morning at the bedside of Gabriel before his death.

The circumstance was most extraordinary, and to her mind unaccountable; for whilst she had been gossiping in the kitchen with the house maidens, who talked of nothing but the ship-wrecked gentleman and his attendant, Dame Gee had heard them remark: "how very shy Sir Piers and Sir Hugh seemed to be of the former; and that Mistress Agnes and Mistress Robina did not appear to like him much better, which they rather wondered at, as he was as likely a young man to look upon as they would wish to see on a summer's day."

Now therefore to find Radcliffe in close conference, by moonlight, and in a stolen interview, for every thing proclaimed it to be such, with Agnes—Agnes, the beloved, the betrothed of Reginal Elford,—was a thing so provokingly exciting to curiosity, that Dame Gee would have given the world could she but really have commanded one of those spirits, with whom she bore the character of being so familiar, to discover and unveil to her this mystery. But there was no help for it; she or any one, as Harry Percy says, might call the devil, but always with a shrewd doubt of his appearing in obedience to such a summons: so, therefore, on the present occasion, she very much preferred the more simple agency of her own sharp ears; and listened accordingly as attentively as possible to catch the least word that might be spoken by either party loud enough to be heard.

She now saw, with astonishment, that Radcliffe had caught the hand of Agnes, who appeared not angrily to resent the freedom, though she motioned to draw it back. Her head was

bent; and by his action, the vehement and continued sound of his voice, it seemed as if he was expostulating with her in a manner of considerable energy. There was a moment's pause; and a few low tones, like those of sorrow, came from the lips of Agnes, and Dame Gee saw her put her handkerchief to her eyes. What Radcliffe had said to her, or what the young lady replied, she could not tell; but the listener observed that he left her for a moment, paced up and down the terrace with long and hasty strides, then stopped, and at length returned to Agnes, who drew nearer the house, and made an evident motion as if she were about to enter it.

Again Radcliffe caught her hand, and the following hurried, broken, and almost unintelligible, sentences met her ear: "Good heavens! you will not, then?"

The answer of Agnes was spoken so low that it could not be heard, except the last words: "I tell you once again, my father would never pardon it—I rely wholly upon your honour to ——"

Radcliffe spoke again, and these few sentences were distinctly heard: "I have solemnly sworn it, Agnes; and let what will be the event, you shall see I respect truth." His voice sunk: again it became audible. "Do not fear: I will act as I have said: can you doubt my sincerity after what I have this night spoken, after what I have promised? Have I not bound my own soul by the awful solemnity of ——" The rest was lost.

Agnes answered in a deep, low tone; and Radcliffe's reply to what she said was made in a gentle, soothing, kind voice, but too gentle for one word to reach the listener's ear. Dame Gee saw him at length press the hand of Agnes to his lips in a hurried manner; and immediately after she retreated into the house, and closed the door as softly as she had opened it.

Radcliffe for some time paced up and down with folded arms, in the moonlight, and now stopping and looking at the door through which Agnes had retreated; then again renewing his pensive walk, till, at last, he turned into a path that led round the house towards the hall entry. Dame Gee quitted the window, her head filled with a fine and busy subject for speculation, curiosity, and, perhaps, mischief.

CHAPTER XVI.

Here's a large mouth, indeed,
That spits forth death and mountains, rocks and seas;
Talks as familiarly of roaring lions
As maids of thirteen do of puppy dogs.

SHAKSPEARE.

It now becomes necessary we should revert to the valiant Captain Coleman, who so gallantly offered to squire home Mistress Raleigh. That unfortunate gentlewoman was grieved that she should be obliged to accept the offer of a person, whose mind, manners, and conversation, were so ill suited to her own. But the remembrance of her poor little girl, a child about eight years old, and who, if anything happened to herself, would be left friendless in the world, overcame all her scruples, and she resolved to set out with him as soon as possible.

Many vexatious delays, however, arose: first, the old horse, that loved the freedom of the field, led the boy an hour's dance in catching him; and secondly, though there was a saddle, the pillion had been lent, and had to be sent for; and though last, not least, the Captain, on strolling down to the nearest public-house, to borrow, if possible, for the nonce, a pair of pistols he had there left in pawn for certain scores of rum and old sack, chanced to meet an acquaintance just arrived from the country, somewhat flush of money, and who was a greenhorn to boot. The Captain, amongst his many other natural gifts, had one which resembled the instinct of an old cat, namely, to be ever on the watch for prey, and never to let slip a mortal creature, like a poor mouse, if there was a chance of catching him.

The Captain, following in this respect the strong propensity of his nature, had now a sharp eye upon his friend; and accepting as he immediately did, an invitation to partake of a cool tankard and a pipe, he drank only as much as Mistress Foretop used to say was enough to make him pleasant; and then proposed, as an amicable method of whiling away the time, that he and his friend should just, for some small matter, take a game at shovel-board, or throw a cast with a pair of dice, or cut the cards for knaves and kings; or, if he preferred

it, to try a shut up at fox and geese, or even a round at shittlecock, as it was then both called and spelt; a pastime so fashionable in the days of James and Charles the First as to be played at court. The Captain having managed, by these social and pleasing arts, to lighten his friend's pockets of as much of his money as he could possibly prevail upon him to lose, began to turn his thoughts on Mistress Raleigh; so that (notwithstanding the temptation of a fresh black jack standing but half emptied on the table) he soon obliged his steps to take the same direction, and set off, tolerably well armed with a formidable brace of pistols, redeemed by his successful gambling from the thraldom to which they had been consigned; and by no means deficient in what is usually called Dutch courage.

All these circumstances very much delayed the setting out of Mistress Raleigh; so that it was towards evening when she found herself mounted high on a pillion, behind Captain Coleman, on the back of old Hector, and trotting down a narrow, dark, and muddy lane, fenced on each side by one of those high-banked tree-grown hedges so common in the county of Devon. It was exactly that hour when every thing becomes imperfect to the sight, a dark uniformity of tint pervading all around, whilst the general outline of any object might be seen, though its detail is obscured: at such a time the eye is often deceived, and mistakes inanimate things for those that have life and being; thus giving an alarm to the timid mind when no cause for apprehension exists. Mistress Raleigh now suffered a good deal from these terrors, as she looked about her, and fancied every old stump of a tree, that appeared at a short distance, into a man and a robber. Not so Captain Coleman, who vaunted his valour and talked big, without shewing the least sign of alarm; and indeed, if his own account of himself was worthy of credit, he had, on many occasions, proved as valiant as that Hector, after whom the old horse he rode had been so honourably named.

Mistress Raleigh did not, perhaps, so entirely rely upon the valour of her escort as to feel perfectly at ease, for he perceived her terrors; and on her saying something about the men who so beset travellers, etc., the Captain endeavoured to encourage her with such assurances as the following:—

"Never fear, dame, whilst I am with you; for if the devil himself should start up in the shape of Roger Rowle, I have a more effectual way of laying him than could ever be found by the best black cassock of them all. My pistols, that hang here ready loaded in the holsters of this saddle—my pistols, I say, discourse an argument that carries with it more weight than

one of Latin; for it is composed of lead and brimstone, something like the sermons of the chaplain of Grenville's troop. He was turned out of the regiment by Sir Richard, because he preached not orthodox on the Scripture use of the vine-press; and kept himself sober whilst the General and Captains got drunk. Grenville's chaplain dealt in heavy discourses, two hours long, and would talk to his Majesty's officers of the burning lake; and therefore do I compare him to lead and brimstone: the one shewing the dulness of his discourse, and the other the Scripture comfort of his doctrine."

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Mistress Raleigh, not heeding the Captain's commentary on his army chaplain, "what is that lurking yonder under the hedge, as if to surprise us? I am sure it is a man—only look! What can it be?"

"What can it be! A—a—I—I do see something," said the Captain; "but, pshaw, don't be a fool: it's nothing after all but the stump of an old tree; or, maybe, of a milestone. It's nothing; so fear not." And giving a good spur to old Hector's sides, to spirit him on at a hand-gallop, he added, "I fear not, and I say, fear not; for I would knock down the best man in England with only the but end of my riding rod, who should dare start up and say, 'Stand,' to us."

The Captain's challenge was given in a high bold tone of defiance, that was most unexpectedly answered, as the supposed stump of a tree suddenly started up, and became, to visible perception, a tall, large, and powerful man, wrapped up in a cloak, with a slouched hat on his head, and a piece of crape over his face: he started forward, seized the horse by the rein, crying STAND to Captain Coleman.

Mrs. Raleigh screamed aloud: the Captain uttered an exclamation of terror and surprise, his hands trembled, his teeth chattered, and he fumbled at the holster, and drew out a pistol. But ere he could do any execution with it, if any he meditated, his assailant wrenched the pistol out of his hand; and using it as the young warrior, David, did the sword of the giant he had overcome in battle, turned it against its master. He presented it to Coleman's head, and threatened to blow out his brains, unless he instantly gave up his money.

"There is no fighting without arms," said the Captain, as he drew forth an old leathern purse, and yielded it to the highwayman. The robber took it with much deliberation; gave it a toss in his hand, ere he passed it into his own pocket, and swore it was very light. Light certainly it was, for the Captain was too cautious a man to carry about with him the whole of his morning's winnings. During this time, so completely was the man of war overcome by surprise, or some other feel-

ing, that he actually remained as quiet as old Hector, who stood stock still, like a well-disciplined trooper, waiting further orders. His rider never once attempted to spur him on, or to make any resistance; and Mistress Raleigh afterwards was heard to declare, that he trembled more than herself, though he contradicted this, and said it was the horse that shook under the weight of his double riders.

The robber now advanced to the widow, and demanded her money also: she prepared to yield it, but not quite so readily as the Captain had done; for though she offered no resistance, she nevertheless ventured on a mild and gentle expostulation. "Sir," said Mistress Raleigh, "I am ready to obey your demands, since life is a thing more precious than silver, or even than gold, though gold I have none to give you. Yet I must tell you—and you shall hear me, for if you insist I yield —that if you take this purse, you do in some sort take my life. Perhaps you are not entirely hard of heart; I will hope you are not. Distress may have driven you to desperate courses, for many, alas! in these days, have fallen from sorrow into sin. I am a widow, sir, the widow of Doctor Raleigh, who, as all the country knows, was so cruelly murdered in his prison. I have a child, a poor orphan child: God knows we live hard enough, and I toil like the meanest to get us bread. This purse contains the payment of a small sum of money that was lent by my poor husband, just before his misfortunes, to assist an honest tradesman who wanted help; for never was the hand, the heart, or the door of my unhappy husband closed on the unfortunate. If you take this small store, you take our all, and reduce the widow and the fatherless to the lowest state of misery."

"If that purse," said the robber, with energy, for he had paid the utmost attention to all she said—"if that purse contained a thousand crowns I would not touch one of them without you gave it me freely. The widow of Doctor Raleigh is safe from all danger from me or mine. What I am, or who I am, it boots not to say, except it be to tell you thus much. In the troublesome year before the last, during the siege of a certain town, your husband was the means of saving my life. I was a prisoner, and should have been most unjustly hanged as a spy, but for his pleading for me."

"You are like, friend, to hang for a thing of no less moment," said Coleman, whose courage somewhat returned on finding the highwayman so sensible to generous feelings towards Mistress Raleigh. "I am guarding this good gentlewoman home, and so as you will not touch her purse, I will thank you to give me mine back again; for I am not the richest man in the world any more than yourself."

"Peace, fellow," said the robber, "and rest satisfied whilst you have whole bones in your skin, for they are not so easily mended when once broken as a gambler's purse may be. You rob the simple and the ignorant at no risk at all; and I do but rob a stab-cast, a pick-thank, and a loaded-dice-man by the wayside, at the risk of my own neck. I will give thee nothing but a broken head, if thou darest to swagger here with me. So silence, and let me speak a word to this worthy gentlewoman; and then you may pass on your way, for I have done with you."

Mistress Raleigh would have spoken, but the robber would not suffer her: he thus continued: "I am not so bad, though, perhaps, bad enough, as you may think me. But that is not to the purpose; for what I would say concerns not myself alone, but you and your poor child. These are evil times; and I can tell you, Mistress Raleigh, that harmless as you are, yet you are not without enemies. Barret will never forgive you for having prosecuted him for your husband's death; though he was, to the shame of justice be it spoken, acquitted. Now mark my counsel, and it shall not fail you, and possibly the hour will arrive, sooner than you think for, when you may be driven to follow it. Should you need shelter from danger, or should you be driven by any distress from your own home, fly to the glen of Lydford; fear not, for there shall you meet a friend. Bring with you no one but your poor child; for if a third person is seen, your friend will not appear to receive you. Remember this, and come alone. Give me no answer, but recollect that the man who was rendered desperate by all that can goad on a man to madness or to crime, who dared rob a villain worse than himself, yet, nevertheless, would not wrong the widow and her child—such a man, I say, may be trusted, may be relied on. Farewell: beware of the fellow who is with you; I know him, and that he is a trap by trade."

So saying, this extraordinary highwayman wrapped his cloak close around him, made for a part of the hedge where by an aperture he had so suddenly passed into the road on hearing the approach of travellers, and carrying off the noble captain's pistol and purse, as trophies of victory, disappeared as speedily as he came. The Captain growing valiant so soon as danger was removed from his path, struck his spurs into old Hector's sides, and muttering a few oaths, threats (and also declaring what great things he would have done, had not the management of his horse, and his embarrassment about Mistress Raleigh, deprived him, for the moment, of all power, so that he lost his pistol, and could do nothing), he set off at a round trot, and soon cleared the narrow and dark lane where he

had sustained so notable a defeat. Nothing else worthy record occurred during the journey, and it finally ended in a safe arrival at the widow's door.

Mistress Raleigh's cottage stood not far distant from the church of Tamerton Foliot; we do not here say more about it, because we shall have occasion to revert to it hereafter in a more important part of our narrative. It was now dark, and on entering the house Mistress Raleigh found her little girl sitting alone, over a small fire, anxiously waiting the return of her mother, whose delay had cost her many tears. The widow procured a light; and though the cowardly conduct of her guide, and the warning given respecting him by the robber, had made an impression on her mind by no means favourable to the Captain, yet, nevertheless, she considered herself bound to shew him such civilities as she could, in return for his having escorted her home.

She produced, therefore, such scanty refreshments as her house contained. These were poor and homely enough, but the Captain did not refuse them; and having satisfied his appetite, the widow, who had been engaged with her dear little girl whilst he supped, now looked anxiously for his departure. He declared his intentions to be those of returning immediately to Plymouth, where he talked of knocking up constables and magistrates that very night, in order that he might lay an information, and cause to be apprehended the rascal who had so violently disarmed and robbed him. Mistress Raleigh, though she feared to offend him, nevertheless could not help venturing an observation that she thought if he had acted with more spirit, when he was first stopped, no harm would have ensued to himself or his property, for the robber had seemed to her to be unarmed altogether.

"Or, most probably, bearing about him some concealed arms," said Captain Coleman; "but in regard to my conduct, widow, whatever there was in it that might seem not so daring as my usual practice on such occasions would have warranted you to expect, I can truly say you were the cause of it. I have great tenderness, great consideration, for your sex; it is the fault of my character. Why, hang me! if I could ever sack a town with any heart, when the women came squalling about me. I saw your terror before the robber came up; and if I saw that when there was no danger, what might I not expect when a fellow, that looked as strong as Hercules, seized my horse by the bridle? and though you say he was unarmed till he forcibly possessed himself of my pistol, yet I think differently, and that he was very strongly armed under his cloak. Besides which, how knew I that old Hector would stand fire?

There's no saying what might have been the consequence if he had started, or reared, or kicked at the report of my pistol, if I had been so rash as to fire. You behind me on the pillion, you must have been thrown, you might have been killed, there's no saying what might have been the consequence; so I acted for the best solely on your account; for if I had been alone, I would have brought off the fellow at my horse's tail. As it is, I gave in to your weakness, and by my means you see all went well, for you saved your money."

"I thank heaven I did," said Mistress Raleigh; "but the robber's refusing to take it was not only extraordinary, but for one in his way of life, truly generous: I shall never forget it."

"Nor I neither," said the Captain; "for, confound the rogue, he left me most cause to remember him. He stole a purse containing fifteen gold pieces, and ten silver crowns, and a pistol that has been as dangerous, in its day, as the plague; for it was never seen, when in my hand, but death was sure to follow on mankind; and as to his generosity to you, I do not believe it, no, not for a moment. It was fear, pure fear; for the rascal saw well enough, that though I had magnanimity of spirit sufficient, out of tenderness to you, to pass over my own wrongs, rather than terrify you by making war about myself, yet had he attacked you, or laid but a little finger upon your purse, he saw I should have felled him to the earth; therefore he made a shew of generosity, and let you go scot free. Now, good widow, I am a plain man, and I honestly tell you a poor gentleman, owing to the times, and I do think, that as my loss was sustained solely in your service, that the value of my pistol and of my purse ought to be considered. Wherefore I must beg, as some small compensation, that you hand over to me the half of those same forty shillings which I enabled you to save from the robber."

Mistress Raleigh looked exceedingly distressed; her own poverty was extreme; she had a child to maintain, and an immediate cause of necessity for money, that she kept a secret fast locked in her own bosom; in every way, therefore, this sum was of consequence to her. To deprive her of half her little store would be a cruel act; the value of the pistol she did not know, but she was quite certain that the purse, of whose lightness the robber had complained, did not contain what the Captain averred. She offered him a quarter of the sum of what she had about her, as some reimbursement for his loss; but this he refused, and insisted on his first demand, raised his voice, and on her again making a strong remonstrance, and begging him to consider the distresses of herself and her child, he grew so violent and so rude as to offer to help himself to the purse from her pocket.

Mistress Raleigh screamed with affright, the child cried out at seeing the struggle between her mother and this new robber, when suddenly the latch of the cottage door was raised, and a young man, tall, well-looking, and dressed in a large horseman's cloak, stepped in (most probably he had heard the cries for help before he did so), and going up to Captain Coleman grasped him by the collar, freed the widow, and shook him off ere the astonished rogue well knew by whom he was so suddenly assaulted. An order, that he should instantly leave the house, was pronounced by the young gentleman in a tone of high command, whilst he drew a short sword that he wore by his side to enforce it in a more determined and peremptory manner.

The Captain had no inclination to dispute an order thus strongly given; for he grumbled, muttered, yet took up his hat and walked towards the door, as if with the intention to make his exit. When, however, he stood near it, he placed his hand upon the latch, and ere he raised it turned round his head, fixed a look of expressive ferocity and malice on the young man, who had so delivered Mistress Raleigh, as he said, "I go at your bidding now; but the next time we meet you shall go at mine, and possibly where you will not so well like it: I shall remember you." So saying, he paused not another moment, but quitted the cottage, mounted the back of old Hector, and set off as fast as he could on his way to Plymouth. He did not steal the horse, possibly because he could not have remained in the town with safety had he done so: old Hector, therefore, was returned safe to his right owner that night. Our business, however, still lies at the cottage of Mistress Raleigh.

No sooner was Captain Coleman gone, than, without saying a word, the widow gave such a security to her door as it would admit of receiving from a single wooden bolt. This done, she turned round to the young man, took him by the hand, spoke a few confused words of welcome, sunk into a chair, and burst into tears, as he alternately attempted to soothe her agitation, and to bestow some kind notice on the little cherub who stood at her mother's knees, now calling on her not to cry, and now looking with wonder and pleasure in the stranger's face.

The stranger was young; and though dressed in clothes very much inferior to the garments usually worn by the gallants of the period, yet was he one of those striking figures that would nowhere pass unnoticed, and carry with them an air of authority and natural ease which shews superiority of mind and manners, as well as of station, at the first glance.

His face was eminently handsome: its expression frank, noble, and full of kindness; it was such an expression that wins the heart through the eye, and never deceives the favourable opinion it is so well calculated to raise at first sight. Yet in the lofty carriage, in the expanded forehead, the bright and flashing eye, the brows flexible and easily knit or even frowning on the slightest cause of emotion, there was something that spoke irritable and impetuous feelings, which, though we do not defend them as virtues, are, nevertheless, often found united with what is great in heart, tender in disposition, and generous in action.

Such, in appearance, was the young man who had so suddenly rescued Mistress Raleigh. As soon as she could sufficiently recover herself, to enable her to speak, she welcomed him most kindly by the name of Reginald Elford; at the same time asking him, why he came at such an hour? feared his being in her neighbourhood would be dangerous to him, and hoped that Captain Coleman had not recognised him. Finally, she asked where he was now staying, and if he were in safe hands?

"I have no time, dear Mistress Raleigh," replied the young gentleman, "to answer half the questions you propose to me, as my business is most pressing; and though my sense of your worth is, and ever must be, the same, and I would freely trust my life in your power, yet for your own sake I feel it but right not to trust you with a knowledge of those anxious circumstances which, at present, it can do you no good to learn, and if they fail, you might be involved in their consequences. Rest satisfied; for the time being, I hope I am in safety. My greatest care is to seek my father, who has fled from his old concealment, and in a state of mind the most alarming. Yet have I this day seen one, faithful to our affairs, who assured me that you knew where he might be found."

"I do, indeed," said Mistress Raleigh: "your father was in the utmost danger: he was pursued by his enemies, watched, beset in his last lurking place, and escaped once more to trust his life to my care. For some time I managed to conceal him in an upper chamber even in this cottage: within these two days, however, in consequence of some persons, who are on the look out for him, being stationed in the village, we have been compelled to have recourse again to the old tree and the hut—a miserable shelter; but there has he passed two nights, and there will he pass this night. The child has carried him food; for did I go to him so regularly as I could wish, something might have been suspected; whilst little Mary's running out is thought nothing of, and scarcely noticed."

"Dear Mistress Raleigh," said Elford, "how shall I ever thank you as I ought to do, for your generous care of my poor father; and this child, too! so young, yet so early faithful. How do I trace in this the kindness of a merciful Providence, who has on so many occasions made the helpless widow and a poor fatherless girl the means to save the life of my most afflicted and persecuted parent! How shall I thank you? May God requite you, for I have not the means."

"Do not talk of requiting me," said Mistress Raleigh: "of whatever assistance I may be to your father, I do but my duty to the generous friend of my deceased husband—that friend who saved my child and myself from perishing on the moors; who softened the horrors of my husband's imprisonment, and watched over the wretched widow and her hapless infant, when he was so fearfully torn for ever from her hopes. Could I cease to remember these things—could I cease to be faithful—what were I better than one devoid of all true charity, of every grateful feeling of the soul."

Mistress Raleigh spoke with warmth; and after receiving the kindest assurances of the gratitude and respect in which she was held by Reginald, she gave him all necessary instructions, and directed him to the spot where he was to seek his father; and as he knew perfectly well the most intricate parts of the surrounding country, no danger was to be apprehended of his losing his way. Mistress Raleigh saw him depart, with many anxious feelings for his safety, but did not venture to bear him company at that hour of the night. She retired, worn with the events of the day, to rest with her beloved and only comfort, praying God to bless and protect the fatherless and the widow committed to His care.

CHAPTER XVII.

——— Sorrow, and grief of heart,
Make him speak fondly, like a frantic man.
SHAKSPEARE.

YOUNG Elford set forward on his way: the night was beautiful; the blue concave of heaven, studded with its planets and its thousands of brilliant stars, those wonders of creation, shone resplendent; as the moon, full and cloudless, kept on her high course in silent majesty. Not a sound was heard to breathe along the woods, or to disturb the beauty and holy quiet of the scene; save that now and then a tinkling sheep-bell from a distant field, the bark of a dog, or the hooting of an owl, gave a momentary interruption to a stillness that was deep, awe-inspiring, and impressive—a stillness which, at such an hour and in such a night, was calculated to raise the mind to Him who guides the heavens in their courses, who "binds the sweet influences of the Pleiades," and saith to all created things, "I am your Father."

For some time Reginald kept along the highway till he observed an object that Mistress Raleigh had mentioned to him, as the mark to denote where he was to turn out of the public road. This was a stone cross, supposed to be Saxon: it had as yet escaped the fury of the fanatics, who destroyed every venerable relict of the kind throughout the land, under the plea of pulling down Popish abominations. Here, therefore, he turned off, crossed a field, and at length entered upon one of those wild and open pieces of ground, strewn with rocks, so frequently found even amidst the most wooded parts of the county of Devon. Here a little stream, that issued from a hill beyond, coursed its way along, sparkling in the moonlight, and murmuring gently with a sound not ill suited to soothe and to lull "the drowsy ear of night." Reginald, as directed, followed the course of this small stream, which, like a communicative guide, continued to talk to him as it ran forward on the way. It soon entered the skirts of a wood through which it meandered, and was often lost to the sight amid the umbrageous canopy of thick branches and leaves.

He now quitted the more regular path, and struck into one so overgrown with briers, weeds, and nettles, that it was with considerable difficulty he made his way through it; and often

paused to look around him, so as to feel assured he was not losing himself in the wood. But though he could no longer see the friendly brook that had hitherto been his guide, yet its pleasant murmurs still met his ear, as it glided onward by some unseen channel near his path.

Reginald now drew near a hovel that had belonged, in days of yore, to some woodcutter: it was, in its present condition, almost uninhabitable, being ruinous and decayed. An oak of immense size, so hollow at its base that the aperture was large enough for a man to creep into it, stood near. The miserable hut had been originally built of loose stones and peat, like huts of this description still seen on Dartmoor. It was thatched at the top, with a hole in the centre instead of a chimney. The walls had, in many parts, given way, and the door was so shattered as to be incapable of shutting close; whilst the roof was the only thing that afforded security to any person who took shelter beneath it as a place of concealment; for it was so grass-grown, and covered with moss, ivy, and weeds, that at a little distance it could not be distinguished from the thick screen of vegetation by which it was surrounded on every side. It may well be supposed that the interior of such a dwelling could not boast of many comforts.

As Reginald drew near, he perceived through the broken door a ray of light. He stopped and looked in. Again he paused ere he could resolve to enter, and wished for a few moments not only to observe the demeanour of the unfortunate inmate of the hut, but also to recover, in some degree, from the agitation he experienced at the thought of meeting his father under circumstances of more than ordinary distress. Whilst he pauses, we shall say a few words respecting the man on whom he now gazed with so much earnestness and affection.

Sir Marmaduke Elford, descended from one of the most ancient families in Devon, was a younger son; he had been designed for the church, and passed through the university with great honour. Everybody considered him peculiarly adapted for that sacred profession, to which he had been devoted from his boyish days. His mind was of a grave, energetic, and elevated cast; whilst in his feelings and pursuits he was enthusiastic. His passions were strong, but so was his reason; and, like a good governor of himself, he made it his study to endeavour to subdue what was wrong in his nature. It was seldom that he suffered his passions to gain the victory; yet when such a victory was gained, it was unsparing: and even whilst a young man at Oxford, though his general conduct was remarkable for its sedateness, nevertheless, if he did

transgress the rules, it was always in a more daring manner than that practised by a frequent but less impassioned offender.

As he grew up to manhood, the susceptibility of his feelings, his studious, solitary, and melancholy habits cast such a gloom over his mind that many said he was more fit for an ascetic monk, had he been a Papist, than for a clergyman of the mild and sober principles of the Established church. He, however, had a very different view of the subject; and considered the Protestant ministry as a calling the most awful and severe. Perhaps he thought too much of its responsibility, and too little of its hopes, and its cheering influence on the heart. Be this as it may, he never took holy orders; for a circumstance occurred which in a moment changed his destiny, by making him the representative and sole surviving heir of the great estates and family of Elford. Both his elder brothers died, within a week of each other, of the small-pox; and Marmaduke was, therefore, called home from Oxford, and obliged, by the authority of his father (to which he submitted as a point of duty), to abandon the church as a profession altogether. He was now received into the family mansion, near Sheepstor in Devon, with all the honours and consideration due to the sole heir of so ancient and noble a descent.

His change in life was great, but it made no alteration in his habits, studies, or disposition. The same gloom hung over his spirits, and depressed all those qualities of mind that are most engaging and amiable in youth. He was just as much as ever in danger of becoming a misanthrope, for he seemed to feel no interest in anything belonging to this world; and whilst he bent all the powers of his strong mind on the most bewildering portions of theology—searching out the hidden things of futurity—he almost overlooked those that lay before his view. In him, too, this tendency to deep metaphysical musings was the more alarming, since a whisper went round that the Elfords in more than one generation, had exhibited marks of an hereditary derangement of the intellects.

At this alarming crisis, when no one could rouse young Elford from his mystical studies and his gloom, he was saved from any ill consequences that might have resulted from them by a power, which, though it is represented by poets as being wielded by the hand of a child, is often seen to be strong enough to subdue even warriors, who never yielded to a mortal arm of flesh and blood. To speak plainly, Marmaduke Elford fell in love; and his feelings, that seemingly had long been torpid under the deep melancholy of his character, now thoroughly roused, knew no moderation; he was as enthu-

siastic in his affections to the beloved object of his choice, as he had ever been devoted to his most favourite studies.

She was a lady of a less elevated rank than his own, and possessed no fortune; but it must be confessed that her merit deserved and fully excused his fondness for her. She was not only beautiful and well accomplished, but was of a most excellent disposition; of a warm and affectionate heart. Glad to see his son take an interest in anything of this world, the father gave his consent to the marriage; and soon after dying, he left Sir Marmaduke Elford and his lovely bride the sole possessors of his great estate.

The youthful pair for some few years enjoyed a degree of felicity seldom found as the lot of humanity. A son, called Reginald, was born to crown their love, and, as it was hoped, to hand down their name in honour to posterity. Sir Marmaduke's peculiar temper had long lost all its asperity and gloom under the holy and gentle influence of pure conjugal affection; whilst his tenderness and enthusiasm, awakened by so excellent an object, if it now was in fault, sinned in too much loving; indeed he might be said almost to adore his wife.

But this bright scene of happiness was destined to know a fearful change. They had no child but Reginald; and whilst he was yet at Oxford, at the same college with the son of the gallant Sir Bevil Grenville, he, as well as that young gentleman (who was only fifteen years old), was called home to Devon, by his loyal father; and Sir Marmaduke, like Sir Bevil, devoted his only son to the service of King Charles. But this was not all: he raised a troop of horse himself; held out his family mansion till it was taken by storm, and then to save life, when no more could be done, fled with his lady and his son to Ford House, near Exeter—a mansion also in arms for the king, and the scene of some of the most memorable actions of heroic valour throughout the whole kingdom during the civil wars. Ford House was then repeatedly taken and retaken by each party, till Fairfax and Waller finally subdued it in the name of the Parliament.

The ruin that fell on the brave Sir Marmaduke and his gallant son Reginald is already known to the reader. But part of the history of the former is yet to be told, though we cannot here so fully relate it as might be wished; for even in his own day it was involved in mystery. We allude to the extraordinary circumstances said to have attended the death of Lady Elford, and to which we shall have occasion hereafter to refer. These circumstances had so affected the mind of the unfortunate and persecuted husband, that his reason received a shock from which he never wholly recovered; and

there were moments when the wildness and irregularity both of his conduct and discourse shewed an unsettled, if not a deranged, state of mind. It is needless, perhaps, to say, that had not this cause of misery existed to torture his feelings, a man so devoted as he was to the royal cause, must have suffered severely at the thoughts of those distresses which now involved both king and people in one common ruin. Whilst Sir Marmaduke bore arms for the king, and especially after his wife's death, all the smothered enthusiasm of his character had appeared; and, like fire suppressed, so soon as it finds vent, it broke forth but with greater vigour for its former temporary repression.

Sir Marmaduke had been bold and daring in action, but stern and little pitiful in conquest. Brave himself in meeting a foe, and heedless of death or danger whenever it affected his own person, he felt not so much for his misguided opponents as might have been desired; since, misguided though they were, still they were his countrymen. Those of his own party were considered by him as brothers, and the king as a common father to them all, for whom they were bound to sacrifice all, even like itself; whilst his enemies were looked upon by Elford with an animosity, a bitterness of spirit, that would be satisfied with no concessions, with nothing but their total extirpation or defeat.

To sum up in a few words this sketch of his character, we might say, perhaps, with truth, that nature had given him many and great qualities: but his melancholy views of religion, in early life, had converted what should have been a source of hope into one alone of terror; and latterly rendered desperate by repeated calamities, and the indulgence of a violent party spirit, he was at once stern, fierce, and wretched —an image of the times in which he lived, and truly such a character as, taken altogether, no other times but those of civil discord could have produced.

Whilst the sorrowing son looked in upon his wretched father, he now beheld him sitting, wrapped in a cloak, armed, bareheaded, and reading one of those few books he had preserved as the companions of his misery. The rays of light fell upon a countenance in whose worn and haggard features there was little remains of the manly beauty by which it had once been distinguished; and as little was there to be found, that spoke of gentle or tender affections. Melancholy and severity seemed habitual; though a certain indescribable character of wildness marked the eyes, that wildness occasionally rose to enthusiasm, and even to grandeur, in its expression.

As Reginald pushed open the door, a dog, the sole com-

panion of the miserable inmate of the hut, barked fiercely. Sir Marmaduke started up, and seized his arms, when his son stood before him. He instantly dropped his hand, looked stedfastly upon him, but shewed no change of feeling or of countenance, as the young man overcome by sorrow, anxiety, and the fatigue he had encountered in so long a search after his afflicted parent, burst into tears, and said, "Oh, my dear father, do I at last see you? But, gracious heaven, in what a place! yet, thank God, I have found you. Are you not glad to see me? Speak to me—give me but your blessing!"

"My blessing," said Sir Marmaduke, mildly, "is ever yours. May God watch over you. But why did you seek me here? You may expose yourself to danger, but me you cannot serve."

Reginald, in some measure comforted by hearing the mild and tranquil tone in which his father addressed him, replied with a warmth of affection, so truly amiable, that even the stern feelings of Sir Marmaduke were in some measure softened, and he looked with a countenance more expressive of interest upon his son that he had hitherto done. Reginald now informed him respecting certain particulars, which his father desired to know, of the search he had made in pursuit of him. The son had more than this to communicate; but he paused, as he felt doubtful if he should relate it, or defer it till the morrow, for he feared it would agitate his spirits. He now produced, from under his cloak, some slight refreshments, which, knowing his parent's distress, he thought would be needed, and pressed him to take some wine that was in a small flask. Reginald then declared it was his intention to pass the night in the hut.

Sir Marmaduke tasted sparingly of the food thus provided for him; but when his son urged him to take repose, the sufferer assured him that he had no inclination to sleep, and would rather converse with the son who had so long been absent. It was evident that on this evening there was more of melancholy than of wildness in the mind and manners of the unfortunate man; for he discoursed in a sad but perfectly consistent manner. Reginald therefore ventured to hint to him that he had a communication to make of some import. Sir Marmaduke inquired what it was. His son then briefly told him, that though the king was still confined in Carisbrook Castle, yet the artful and cruel conduct of the parliament towards their sovereign (having proposed to him terms in the late treaty which they knew Charles, from conscience and his high sense of duty, could never accept), had awakened once more for the unfortunate king a strong feeling of compassion

and loyalty throughout the country; so that it was to be hoped some plan might even yet be set on foot, with the assistance of the Cavaliers in the west, to effect his deliverance, especially as the parliament and the army were much at variance; the latter having boldly declared that they would be satisfied with nothing less than an entire change in the present frame of government. Sir Marmaduke, contrary to his son's expectations, did not seem to be so immediately roused by this communication; for he only smiled when he heard of the divisions now existing between those very powers that had before united for the destruction of the monarchy.

He paused, turned to Reginald, and asked, though with little appearance of interest, if there was any plan in actual agitation for the service of the king.

"There is," replied the young man. "I have now about me papers of import, that I am charged to bear to Sir William Bastard. To-morrow I will tell you all; but not to-night. You look fatigued. I will not, therefore, enter into further particulars. Sir William must be informed of your being in this county; and if he thinks it possible to shelter you, in safety to yourself, he is my friend, and will do it. Then, my dear father, you may be removed from this wretched place."

"It must not be," said Sir Marmaduke. "I am so beset with foes, that should I be seen abroad before your plan, whatever it may be, is ripe for action, suspicion would fall on any friend in this county who received me; it would ruin the enterprise. No, I will never, for the sake of my own ease, become a hindrance to that great cause for which I would freely forfeit life. Life! what is life to me? Have I not lived to see confusion and death cover my native land with misery? my king, a prisoner! who shall say if he is ever destined to know freedom more? Whilst, O heaven! what am I? what has this rebellion made of me?"

Reginald, who feared from these last words, and the wildness of his father's eye, that he was about reverting to that terrible subject, the mention of which always brought on some degree of mental derangement, endeavoured to check him, but he could not.

Sir Marmaduke thus spoke: "Have I not lived to lose all that is the life of life? to see my royal master, for whom I fought and bled, a captive? my fortune seized by ruffian hands, my name branded, my son a wanderer? myself an outcast, a price set upon my head, with nothing left to me but the privilege, like Job, to deplore my ruined honours?"

He paused, as if overpowered by his feelings; and then continued: "These are the fruits of rebellion. It is a fearful

thing to war with Him who is Lord of all. Kings rose against Gibeon; but a greater rose than they, even God himself. At Joshua's prayer, the hosts of heaven warred in his cause—even the sun itself stood still on Gibeon, and the moon in the valley of Ajalon, till the enemies of God were swept from off the earth! But this land of sin and blood is, I fear, given up to the scourge: rebellion prospers—rebellion against the King of Heaven, in his most holy church, and against him also who is his vicegerent here on earth. These are the chastisements of sin."

"My dear father," said Reginald, "I beseech you to listen to what I would impart. Better you should do so, than thus let your own feelings for evils in which you bore no part prey upon your mind. You have done nothing to call forth self-reproach in these dangerous times."

"Nothing!" exclaimed Sir Marmaduke, wildly; "it is false, most false, though spoken by the lips of my own son. Have I done nothing? Who did one fearful deed? Was it not I who urged, who led on, the leaguer of Ford House to repossess it after the rebels had conquered it? There they kept many gallant royalists prisoners. Yes! there was one prisoner dearer than light or life—and how was that prisoner liberated?"

"My father," said Reginald, endeavouring to interrupt the alarming course his thoughts were now taking, "I beseech you, in mercy to my feelings, if not to your own, forbear that dreadful subject. It is in vain to look back: we are but blind instruments in an Almighty hand; nor must we hope to trace out the cause of those terrible chances that sometimes befall us, conscious that however fearful they may be; nevertheless they are still under His all-guiding and directing will. We know not the counsels of God."

"We know them not, indeed," said Sir Marmaduke; "for there is a path, and it is his, which man knoweth not, and which the vulture's eye hath not seen. Yet because he sees and withholds his hand is the dreadful instrument on earth less guilty? or shall blood, the blood of the innocent, be shed in vain? No, its cry shall ascend to heaven. And think whose blood was shed? Was it not hers? the dearest object of my soul, my wife—my wife! Oh, how she loved! her smile was that of an angel. And did not I change it into the livid hues of death."

The miserable man threw himself upon his straw as he spoke; beat his breast with his clenched hand, and shewed every mark of the most wild and absolute despair. His son knelt by his side, endeavoured to soothe his agitation, and in the hope of doing so with more success, even ventured to

repeat, in order to subdue his self-reproaches, those very circumstances which, coloured by Sir Marmaduke's unhappy state of mind, appeared to him in so exaggerated a view.

"My father," he said, "these self-upbraidings are most unjust. Sorrow sees nothing clearly; viewed through its medium, every thing seems distorted. You accuse yourself as the destroyer of my beloved mother. You knew not that you were so; and even if it were true, you were guiltless, since you aimed not intentionally the fatal ball by which she fell."

"Oh, that I were sure she had not died by this hand!" exclaimed Sir Marmaduke. "But there's a doubt, a horrid doubt. And even could you disprove the deed, am I not guilty? for did not I propose and lead on to the leaguer of Ford House, knowing she was there held a prisoner, after the rebels had possessed themselves of the place?"

"But you led it on to rescue your friends, to retake that stronghold for the king, and to deliver my mother from the power of your enemies. You knew not that she, like the noble Lady Banks at Corfe Castle,* would, though a woman, forget the danger of the siege, in the interest she felt for those who led it on. And oh, most miserable chance! at the very moment she appeared at the window, to give the encouraging signal to her friends, you had given the word to fire—my mother fell: some stray ball, winged by a fatal destiny, did the work of death, on one who was already fitted for the company of angels. She died, and you have always feared by your own hand; yet I would beseech you to remember there is, there can be, no proof that it was so. Take comfort, then, my father, and be assured, could my dear mother's spirit look down from her abode among the blessed, she would be grieved by the sight of your distress, and would bid you be at peace. Oh, do not then give yourself up to despair. Do not turn away from the counsels of your son, who would relieve your soul from these bitter self-reproaches. But your eyes, alas! look not upon him. Speak to me, my father, I cannot bear this silence; speak, if but a word."

"My thoughts were in the grave," said Sir Marmaduke in a milder tone; "I will endeavour to recall them. Yes, I will be a man. Whilst I have life it shall be employed, at the command of duty, in the cause of my unhappy prince. As for my own hopes they are gone, or only rest in eternity, that is ever before my view. Speak on, I listen."

"Know, then," said his son, "that Sir Piers Edgcumbe,

* Lady Banks held out Corfe Castle for above six weeks against the rebels. She was, throughout the rebellion, a devoted royalist, and active in the good cause.

the gallant Tremaine, Trelawny of Trelawn, Sir William Bastard, and other gentlemen in the west, are leagued together, to raise a body of men, and privately to hold intelligence with their friends in all parts of England, and more especially in the Isle of Wight, for the service of the king. A plan is laid to free him from his captivity, to plant the royal standard in the west, to regain Plymouth and Exeter for our cause, and, with the blessing of heaven upon our arms, once more to rouse all hearts to meet our enemies, and to replace the king upon his throne."

"The king's honour is in the multitude of his people," said Sir Marmaduke: "I trust they will rally round his standard. Who is at the head of this enterprise, and in what way am I required to act?"

"Sir Piers Edgcumbe and many other gentlemen are the chief actors in it," replied Reginald: "your counsel would be much valued by them as an experienced leader; and those who were in times past your old followers, and love you as a father, for they were born upon your land, would, on your appearing amongst them, rise to a man in any enterprise you may favour. All is in agitation. The gentlemen thus leagued together propose shortly to hold a meeting at the house of a friend, who, though new to them, is zealous in their plot. You will have notice to join them the moment this hot pursuit of you, by your enemies, may be somewhat abated. Our friends fear nothing but sudden discovery before all is ripe for action. I have offered to fulfil an office of some peril; to bear their letters, and to communicate with their adherents, both here and in the Isle of Wight. In a few days I shall have occasion to seek Sir Piers Edgcumbe, as I have some matters of moment for his ear."

"And who is this new friend?" inquired Sir Marmaduke.

"Sir John Copplestone of Warleigh," replied his son.

"Sir John Copplestone!" exclaimed Sir Marmaduke; "I would not trust him. He was once leagued with Ireton and Waller, held close communication with Ruthen, when Saltash was betrayed into the hands of that rebel. Sir John is likewise a guardian to the young fanatical roundhead, Amias Radcliffe, who killed Sir Shilton Calmady in the fatal affray at Ford House. It was thrice contested, and thrice captured by each party, ere Waller finally reduced it; I would not trust Sir John Copplestone."

"There is no cause to doubt him," said young Elford: "he has been disappointed by his own party, who have held back certain lands of the sequestered royalists, that they promised should be his part of the spoil, for former ser-

vices in Devon. He has quarreled with Ireton, holds no fellowship with Waller, vows to be revenged on Ruthen, even to the death, and is most zealous in his return to the king's cause. General Chudleigh, we know, changed, and came back to his old master, in consequence of the Earl of Stamford's falsely charging on him the blame of the defeat of the parliament army at Stratton Heights. Copplestone is a man of so much wealth and power, that we may not with safety refuse his advances, when the last blow is to be struck in the west for the king."

"His majesty needs friends," said Sir Marmaduke: "I hope he may find them faithful. I have nothing left but life to lose in his service, and that is worthless to me; for my life what is it, but to drag on a weary existence with care and sorrow? and so frail is the spirit within me, so easily quenched, that the first rude breath of these angry wars would scatter it like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors. To-morrow, my son, I will talk farther with you; but now I am weary, and would fain try to take rest. You will repose here to-night. Did you not say so?"

"Yes, my dearest father; to-morrow I have a far journey. I can sleep on this straw: many a worse bed have I found since we last parted."

"We will both endeavour to rest," said Sir Marmaduke: "I need it. Pray for me, my son; pray for the king; for great is his affliction. I may say with the prophet of old, that the thoughts of my bed and the visions of my mind trouble me; yet will I endeavour to find comfort in Him who can alone bind up the wounds of the broken-hearted."

Reginald rejoiced to see that the violent paroxysm of his father's affliction was for the time passed away. After such storms Sir Marmaduke generally became more quiet and composed. He now lay down to rest, as his son, with pious care, watched over him. At length Reginald perceived by his stillness and deep breathing that the sufferer had for awhile forgotten his sorrows in sleep. He prepared therefore to follow his example; but it was long ere he himself sunk into repose.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Be it a weakness, it deserves some praise;
We love the play-place of our early days.
The scene is touching, and the heart is stone,
That feels not at that sight, and feels at none.
COWPER.

We must now leave for awhile the unfortunate Sir Marmaduke Elford and his son, whilst we return to the youth who was so happily saved from shipwreck. On the morning after the death of his attendant, Amias Radcliffe took a grateful, though somewhat formal, leave of Sir Piers Edgcumbe, and at an early hour set off, on a horse lent him by Sir Piers, on his return to that house which for so many years had been his home, till he was sent abroad, attended only by Gabriel, in so strange a manner by his guardian. Radcliffe and his horse crossed in the ferry-boat from Mount Edgcumbe to the opposite side of the river, where remounting the animal, he slowly set forward on his way, deeply pondering in his mind the many extraordinary circumstances that had recently befallen him. His late perils; the unhappy situation in which he stood; the anxious state of his feelings; what sort of a reception he should meet with from his guardian on this sudden, uncalled return to Warleigh, and the fearful hints and dark suggestions thrown out by the conscience-stricken Gabriel, engaged his thoughts as he rode on, almost unconscious of the time that was occupied by the sluggish animal in passing over the ground.

So entirely was he absorbed, that it required more than an ordinary circumstance to rouse him from his thoughtful mood. He was, however, at last awakened to a sense of surrounding objects, as, at a particular turn of the road, the view of the pretty, quiet, and sequestered village of Tamerton Foliot at once burst upon his sight. To how many strange and mingled feelings did the sight of its thatched cottages, its many trees, its running stream, and the tower of its old church, give birth! The remembrance of his childhood, of his youth, of the sorrows, pleasures, and anxieties that had by turns been his, since he last saw the village, at once rose before him.

The road Radcliffe pursued led through Tamerton to War-

leigh House: it was not far distant. The situation of the village was one of exceeding beauty. In the midst of three valleys, that there unite together, is seen a small hill, on the gentle swell of which stands the old Gothic church of Tamerton Foliot. A flight of steps, hewn out of the solid rock, leads up to the churchyard, where many a moss-grown stone reminds the passenger, in homely phrase, or in still more "homely verse," that he, too, is passing on to the same end of all his earthly hopes and cares, as that to which the lowly tenant, who sleeps beneath the green sod, has been consigned. A row of venerable elms surrounds the churchyard, and casts its deep shadow, with an air of gloom, on every object beneath—a gloom well suited to the silence and solemnity of the scene. Here, too, might be found more than one ancient yew tree, and a stone cross that had not then been knocked down by the zealous fanatics of the day, to whom such carved images were an abomination.

Tamerton creek flowed close up to the village, passing at their base wooded hills and green slopes; in one particular spot, surmounted by a lofty height, whose summit, crowned with a fine bald rock, was known by the name of Warleigh Tor. Close without the churchyard stood a venerable oak, said to have been planted in ancient times by one of the Copplestone family, whose descendant, Sir John, was now the possessor of Warleigh.* At the date of our narrative it was in its prime—a large, flourishing, and noble tree, whose far and spreading branches reminded Radcliffe, as he looked upon them with a sigh, of the days and the scenes of his childhood. He remembered how often he had gamboled with his schoolboy companions under its branches—how often he had climbed amidst its thick canopy of leaves to shake down acorns, and with what peculiar delight it was eyed by himself and his playmates, as, at the time of the village fair, a well-known dealer in cakes and toys usually took her stand under its shade.

As Radcliffe, for a moment, stopped his horse beneath the well-remembered tree, his eye rested on a cottage that was near it; and recollecting that his nurse had lived there when he quitted England, he resolved to go in, and make some inquiries of her respecting the family at Warleigh, which he wished to have answered before he reached the house.

The cottage was one of those small dwellings so peculiar for their picturesque beauty in the county of Devon: it was of Gothic date, built with stone and thatched; its label-headed

* The Copplestone oak was so injured by time, that its total decay was apprehended. In order, therefore, to save it, Mr. R., the present proprietor of Warleigh, cut down, in part, the decayed timber. The tree is now growing and flourishing again. This, it is hoped, will lengthen the days of the old oak, but it has spoiled its picturesque effect.

windows, with their diamond-shaped panes of glass, were surrounded by the rose and the myrtle bush, that here, from the mildness of the climate, grew in the open air; ivy and creeping plants had mantled its sides, and encroached with their tendrils even upon the roof. A stone porch, also decorated with a rose-bush and honeysuckle, gave entrance to the hatch, or half door, that was now closed; whilst the upper half being thrown back, like a window shutter, shewed the interior of the humble dwelling.

The cottage stood in a garden, surrounded, on the side next the road, by a low wall of loose stones: within grew a few pot-herbs. A stray elder-bush or two might there be seen; and several flowers, in a bed near the door, shewed a more than ordinary attention to neatness, for not a weed had been suffered to gro wamongst them. A hive of bees and a donky (that was feeding on a patch of greensward near the garden) completed the picture; except in its most interesting object, which remains to be mentioned.

A girl with a fair skin, a cheek like the rose, and a head of curling hair as bright as gold, was seen playing about, with her hat in her hand, and chasing one of those pale yellow butterflies that appear amongst the first insects of the summer or the spring. As the pretty flutterer skimmed from flower to flower, now alighting, for a moment, on some petal or stem, again winging its way, and anon pausing on the sunny flower-bed, or on the side of the old wall, the child pursued with eagerness the object of her chase, till Radcliffe at once interrupted her sports, by coming up and asking her, "whose little girl she might be?" The child stopped, stood quite still, blushed deeply; but was too shy to answer his inquiry, as to "whose little girl she might be," with a single word more than the simple assurance that she was—"mammy's."

By this time Radcliffe had dismounted, and was tying up his horse to the tree, when there appeared at the cottage door a female about forty years old, dressed in black, whose delicate complexion and features, with a certain ease in her deportment, and a melancholy expression of countenance, seemed at once to speak the gentlewoman suffering from misfortune. Radcliffe approached her with respect, and soon found by the answers she gave to his questions, that the former possessor of the cottage was no more, and that herself and her fatherless girl had become its tenants. She said her name was Raleigh.

Radcliffe thanked her for the readiness with which she had replied to him, and shewed by his manner that he had not received with indifference the news of his nurse's death. "The poor old woman, madam," he said, "who lived here before you, was my nurse. She was alive, and looked likely

to live for many years, when I left England: I am but now returned to this country, and am journeying home. She is the first old acquaintance I have inquired after, and she is dead; poor old Kitty, she lived for many years close to the churchyard, and now, no doubt, sleeps in it. Peace be to her memory! she was a kind nurse to me, when I had no mother to take care of me; I shall never forget her."

"You are, I believe, sir," said Mistress Raleigh, "the godson of Sir John Copplestone of Warleigh?"

"I am, madam; and as you are now his neighbour, may I ask if Sir John is well? if his daughter is still with him, and in health?"

"Mistress Gertrude Copplestone, I believe, is well," replied the Widow Raleigh; "she is still at home with her father. Sir John, I think, you will find absent this morning, as I saw him ride by, an hour or two ago, towards his favourite farm. I have not yet seen him return. Would you be pleased, sir, to walk into my poor cottage, and to rest you ere you go on to Warleigh, for you look much fatigued."

"No, madam, I thank you," said Radcliffe: "I am not fatigued; but I have lately known some dangers that have affected my health, though, I trust, not for any continuance. Some other time I will call at your door, and inquire after you; for neither your worth nor your misfortunes are unknown to me. Is this pretty litte girl your only child?"

"She is all that is left to me," said Mistress Raleigh: "she is my only comfort and my only care. I pray God to spare her to me, and that I may, for her sake, also be spared; for, alas! what would poor Mary do without me now she has lost her father, and has no friend upon earth? But a father she has in heaven, and to him will I trust her."

"Poor child," said Radcliffe, "she is a sweet creature," and he drew forth a piece of silver coin he chanced to have about him, and gave it the girl. It was a remarkable piece of money, as it was foreign; and appeared to make a lively impression on the fancy of the child; for she said "she would not spend that pretty piece of silver; but as there was a hole in it, she would get her mother to give her a ribbon, and would wear it round her neck, as ladies did pictures."

Radcliffe, who was fond of children, patted her on the head, smoothed down her sunny locks, kissed her, and bidding adieu to Mistress Raleigh, once more mounted his horse, and set on his way. Nothing else occurred worthy of notice. He soon reached a spot where the venerable mansion of Warleigh at once burst upon his view, and it remains to this day much the same as it then appeared to the eyes of the wanderer who looked upon it with feelings not easily to be de-

scribed; so strange and so mingled were they in their nature. The house was originally built by one of the Gorges, barons of Foliot, in the reign of King Stephen: at subsequent periods it had undergone some changes and alterations; the last in the time of Henry the Eighth. It was a stately pile of buildings, finished by its clustering gables (that appeared peeping through the dark green of the trees and avenues by which it was surrounded), affording that graceful effect which the spiral line in architecture never fails to produce when seen amidst the umbrageous branches and foliage of forest trees. The house was built of stone; its characteristic was that of grandeur; its arched and projecting porch, leading to the baron's hall, its windows divided in the midst by broad mullions; its clustering chimneys, and many courts; its chapel, gardens, terraces, and orchards,—all displayed the varied and somewhat sombre magnificence of an old baronial dwelling; where all, like the heart of the English baron and the spirit of his hospitality, was on a large and substantial scale; where the ample hearth never wanted its blazing fagot, nor the board its cheerful repast, nor the "wine-cup" its pledge of welcome to the stranger, the tenant, or the friend.

A long avenue of fine elm trees, neighboured by many an oak, afforded, in the lengthened pomp of their deep shadows, an imposing and sheltered approach to the house: their foliage, thick and dark, their lofty branches and ivy-grown trunks, harmonised with the grave and stately character of the buildings. As some relief to these objects of veneration, the bright and sparkling waters of the Tavy were seen silently and softly flowing past the bank at the back of the house.

As Radcliffe rode slowly up the avenue, he sighed to think that on returning to the scenes of his childhood he could not meet them with that cheerfulness which home is so much calculated to inspire, and still more so in the heart of him who has known toil, care, and danger, since he parted from it last. But many circumstances had occurred to throw a damp upon his spirits; and a melancholy foreboding seemed to steal over him, which his reason refused to admit, yet his feelings could not shake off, as an augury of sorrow.

Whilst he was thus musing, he was suddenly startled by the appearance of a man who stood leaning with his hands on the top of a birding gun that he rested on the ground. Radcliffe instantly recognised, in the dark, swarthy, and ill-looking features of the fellow, Will Gubbins, or Black Will, as he was named on account of his gipsy complexion: he was a hind in the service of his guardian, and that very man about whom the dying Gabriel had given him a caution, throwing out hints, the more alarming, perhaps, as they were but half spoken;

for Gabriel had died in the midst of his confession. On seeing Radcliffe, Black Will, who had always a dogged and sulky manner, doffed his cap, and, with an air of ungracious respect, bade him welcome home; observing that his guardian would be surprised at seeing him.

"But not sorry, I trust," said Radcliffe: "where is my godfather?"

"At the farm, young sir," replied the hind, "where I am going to meet him, and will tell his honour who is come back again to Warleigh without being expected." So saying, sulky Will passed on, and left Radcliffe to find his way to the house alone, without running forward (as any other servant of the family would joyfully have done) to throw open the gates for him and announce his arrival. The first living creature that really bid him welcome was his old dog, Carlo, as the animal, a fine bloodhound, such as every gentleman kept in Devon, sprang bounding, leaping, and barking forward, all action and all joy, to assure Radcliffe, that let the world change as it might, his old and faithful dog had not forgotten him. The animal was, indeed, half wild with joy: now would he run round the horse, then leap up as high as the saddle, again bound on before, bark, return, whine, and, in short, do all a dog could do to shew how glad he was to see him.

Radcliffe observed no one about—a circumstance somewhat unusual. It was near the time of dinner, being past eleven o'clock, and noon was the hour of that repast. He got off his horse, tied it up, and, without ceremony, finding the door open, entered the fine old hall. There he found all his old acquaintances just as he had left them. There was the ample hearth, its handirons, of chased silver, finished by the family crest or white spur of Copplestone; for the knights of that house, in old times, were allowed to wear silver spurs, and thence had been called "the white-spur Copplestone" in tournament or battle. There was room enough on each side within the chimney to hold as many persons as could bear to be well roasted by the "yule clog" of a winter's fire.

Noble Gothic windows gave plenty of light and cheerfulness to the hall: in them might be seen, glowing in all the lustre of stained glass, the arms and alliances of the Gorges, the Foliots, the Radcliffes, and the Copplestones, for the two last-named families were blood relatives; and the young orphan, Amias Radcliffe, whose return home we are now detailing, had no kindred so near to him as his guardian and godfather, Sir John Copplestone, then the possessor of Warleigh. The hall was hung with portraits: over the fireplace was that of Ralph de Gorges, armed cap-à-pee. Amongst the pictures there was one that Amias looked upon with affectionate interest, though

he could scarcely remember the original—it was that of his father, Sir Walter Radcliffe. The portrait represented an uncommonly handsome man, in the prime of life; but there was a melancholy, a mild yet complaining air about the countenance, which, even in childhood, made a deep impression on young Radcliffe's mind; so that he never thought of his father without fancying, he could scarcely tell wherefore, that he had been an unhappy man. Perhaps, also, his godfather had assisted in producing this impression, by the reluctance he shewed to talk about the deceased Sir Walter, or even to mention his name.

There was another portrait, likewise, that Radcliffe always looked at with interest—it was the picture of his guardian's sole child, Gertrude, the heiress of Copplestone. It represented only the head, with a rich lace coif thrown over the light auburn ringlets of the fair wearer. The features were handsome, but there was a character of seriousness about them not common in youth. The last to be mentioned—and Radcliffe turned away from it, as he shuddered at recollecting the dark hints of Gabriel—was the picture of his godfather, old Sir John Copplestone. The dress was that of a puritan of the day, where all was plain, even to homeliness. He held a Bible in his hand, but there was nothing in the countenance which seemed to say that the mild and charitable precepts the book inculcated had reached his heart. It was an ill-favoured, sinister countenance, with a grey and envious eye. Leonardo da Vinci would have selected such as this picture represented for the head of Judas; and the portrait-painter had been too faithful to flatter Sir John in his work.

In the centre of the hall stood a finely carved old oak table, round whose social board the barons of Foliot had feasted many a noble guest; whilst, lower down, or ranged on either side, the followers and tenantry often shared in the festivity; for in those days the great lord, seated in all the state of the period, received, in his domain, a homage and a zeal in the devotion of his people to his service now unknown.

Opposite the entrance, a marble flight of stairs (the walls of which were hung with family pictures) conducted to a gallery above, that ran partially around the upper part of the hall, and gave access to various sleeping apartments. But that portion of the gallery facing the lofty windows at the opposite extremity was broad and ample (having an open balustrade of carved oak), and commanded an entire view of the hall beneath. Here the minstrels were accustomed to take their stand, as they played to the light-footed dancers at the high festival of Christmas.

CHAPTER XIX.

O good old man! how well in thee appears
The constant service of the antique world,
When service sweat for duty, not for mead!
Thou art not for the fashion of these times.—
Master, go on, and I will follow thee,
To the last gasp, with truth and loyalty,
From seventeen years till now almost fourscore
Here have I lived.

SHAKSPEARE.

THOUGH we have somewhat detained the reader whilst we spoke of Warleigh and the old Hall, Radcliffe paused in it but a few minutes; and as he stood looking, with an eye of deep interest, upon his father's picture, a door suddenly opened that led from the interior of the house, and the exclamation, "Heaven defend us! dear Master Amias, is it, can it be you?" met Radcliffe's ear.

He turned round, and beheld a man, whose white head and shrunk shank shewed he was far advanced on that race, which, however lengthened, ends with the grave. Yet, though old, there was, in his appearance, like a sturdy time-worn oak of the forest, a freshness that was cheerful. There was still a ruddy colour in his cheek, and hardihood appeared even in decay.

Therefore his age was as a lusty winter,
Frosty, but kindly.

Radcliffe hastened to meet him, shook him by the hand, and said, in a tone that spoke a full heart and a kind one, "Dear Anthony, how glad I am to see you, and to find that you bear your years so well; you're not at all altered since I left Warleigh."

"Getting old, Master Radcliffe, getting old. But, dear heart, if I'm not altered you are, and that sadly. You don't look so fresh as you used to do, and are grown as thin —— Well, dear heart, how strangely things do fall out; there's been great changes here since you went away, Master Amias; but I'm sorry," he continued, shaking his head—"I'm sorry you're come back again, for I fear your godfather won't half like it. And I could tell you such things that have happened! But, bless me, you look so pale and tired—do come and make use of something in my room; a glass of canary to cheer you

up; and there we shall be by ourselves, and Sir John Copplestone won't be back awhile, for he's gone to meet Lawyer Sherrick, to settle about renewing Farmer Riddler's lease: so we'll in, and may be you'll tell me all about how you've fared, and how it has been with you, and how you got back, and who knows of it, and how you came, and what you mean to do, and ——"

"Dear Anthony," said Radcliffe, "I will tell you all; and as you say my godfather will not be back for this hour, I will steal into your room, unperceived, I hope, by any one, and will not refuse a cup of canary to refresh me. I wish to be private with you. Some strange things have happened to me, Anthony, and I wish to talk to you about them, and to ask you some questions. You are of all persons the very man I most desired to see, for you have lived for these forty years in the family: you were my father's faithful servant. I would trust my life in your hands, if that were all; so well do I know your honesty."

"Why, ay, yes," said old Anthony, "I hope I am an honest man, though a poor one: yet not so poor neither, Master Amias; for I have a good house over my head, a warm bed, comfortable woollen clothing, a trencher, and a cup whenever I need it, and that regular every day. And then I have my Bible, and the light of Master Hezekiah's doctrine; and always a good fire in winter, and two candles in my own room; and so I don't see that I'm a poor man at all; and I question if the king's house steward—that is, when he was able to keep one—fared better than me, though I hold my office only under a private gentleman's roof in the county of Devon. But, come along, come along, we'll in, we'll in, and nobody shall know of your being here; for I'll send the little dog-boy—we keep two little dog-boys now, to look after the turnspits—and I'll tell him to see your horse put up, as if a friend of my own had called in, and was in my closet. Aha! there's Carlo by your side—Carlo, Carlo, come here, sir; ay, so it is, Carlo and I, both old servants, old faithful servants, and never desert our masters, let things go how they may. How glad the poor dumb thing is to see you! Look, now, if he don't leap and bound for joy, as if to shew you that, let the world wag as it may, he will still wag his tail to welcome you home. Follow me, Master Amias, follow me softly: we are hard by my closet, and nobody will see you."

So saying, the garrulous old man led the way from the hall to a little snug room of his own; where, amidst account books, pens and ink, and sundry other matters pertaining to his vocation, Master Anthony Lapthorne was wont to sit, installed in all the dignity of house steward to an old English family.

Anthony shut the door softly, slipped the bolt into the staple, laid his finger on his nose, and gave a significant wink of the eye as he said to Radcliffe, in a confidential tone, "I like to make all sure. The housekeeper can't now pop upon us suddenly; and the door is good tough oak, and too thick for listeners. Sit you down, and I'll bring out the canary: let me see, my key, my key, the little key; ay, here it is, here it is;" and so saying he took up a bunch of keys that was hanging at his girdle, which, together with a silver chain round the neck, and a blue cloth doublet, laced and buttoned also with silver, served to shew the nature and dignity of his employment.

Some manchets of wheat bread were produced as well as the wine: the cups were filled; and old Anthony, a practised connoisseur in little niceties and comforts, stirred his own cup with a sprig of rosemary, observing, as he did so, "that it was a wise and wholesome custom in his father's time to keep off the plague, for fear it should be about; and that Radcliffe was come from foreign parts, where people said it was very rife:" he advised him, therefore, to follow his example, and to stir his own wine also with the rosemary. Both were seated, and the old man once more pressed his young master to relate the particulars of his adventures and his return.

"I will tell you every thing before the sun goes down: I promise you to do so. But, Anthony, let us not lose time whilst my godfather is absent. I beseech you listen to me; and to the best of your memory answer me some questions I would now put to you, as they are of importance to me. How long did you live with my father before I was born? I want to know many particulars, and begin with this."

"I lived with Sir Walter's father," replied Anthony, "your grandfather that was, before I lived with Sir Walter. I went into his service just before he was married to my lady, your sweet mother; and ah, well-a-day, to think how we all rejoiced at the wedding when it took place! Your mother looked like an angel—all in white; and Sir Walter looked so handsome, and so happy, in a suit of Genoa-cut velvet overlaid with gold lace; and the father of the bride was dressed in a black satin suit, with white boots; and the bells rung, and the music played, and there was such a dinner! And we wore bride-knots, and all the maidens had bride-laces, and favours, and sprigs of rosemary in their sleeves; and we all cut for cake, and the maidens scrambled for the wedding-ring in the milk-pail, to see who would be married first among them. And I was young then, and strong, and merry like; and we all had new braveries, and danced; how we danced! and I tript it

away with Peggy Lightfoot, and she was as fine as the horse, and ——".

"Yes, my good Anthony, and you were then her bachelor; I know all about that," said Radcliffe, breaking in upon the often-repeated account of the gaieties of Sir Walter's wedding, a favourite subject with the garrulous old man; "but——"

"Oh, there came a sad change," cried Anthony, breaking in upon what Radcliffe was saying in his turn; "yet who knows what is good for a man all the days of his vain life? Sir Walter was married for three or four years, and had no child. And a son he desired to have; and he wished for it, and he prayed for it, day and night, and the Lord granted him his prayer. But it was not granted him without a sorrow that well nigh broke the heart of his joy. For you were born, Master Amias, but your poor mother died."

"I know the melancholy circumstances," said Radcliffe: "but I would learn of you concerning my father after her death, which occurred before his own; for I know not how it is, but my godfather and guardian, for he is both to me, shuns to speak of my father."

Old Anthony shook his head. "There may be a reason for it," he said; "for there was some strange connexion betwixt Sir Walter Radcliffe and Sir John Copplestone that nobody could well make out. They never seemed to like each other, and they would quarrel and spar like a couple of fighting cocks, and yet they were often together; and after his wife's death Sir Walter was almost always with your godfather. Some said one thing, and some another. Certain it is, that, when a young man, your guardian had been a very wild one, and spent a power of money, and, some say, nearly broke his fortune before he turned religious. And I have heard," continued Anthony, lowering his voice, and bending forward his head—"I have heard that there was an ancient contract, or a something, between Sir John Copplestone and your mother, who could not abide him. And it was whispered that your father stepped in, and liked her himself, and she liked him, and so Sir John Copplestone being low in purse, and may be, not caring for a wife (though he afterwards married), was bought off by Sir Walter, and held his tongue about the contract, that would have bound the lady to him in the ecclesiastical court. And if so, besides being blood relatives, for Sir John and your father, you know, were cousins, it might in somewise account for Sir Walter's keeping up friendship with him. And as the laws then stood (before the Parliament got the upper hand, and put down the spiritual court), it was whispered, that, if Sir John took offence, and chose to do it, he

could set aside Sir Walter's being lawfully married altogether by that same old contract; and it was thought that he held it as a sword over Sir Walter's head all the time he was alive."

"Indeed!" said Radcliffe: "then I suppose he influenced my father to nominate him my guardian; for it was strange he should do so without a powerful motive to counterbalance his dislike of Sir John Copplestone."

"That's a matter I know nothing about," said Anthony: "I remember well that, not long before your father died, he and Sir John seemed better friends than they used to be; and Sir John stirred himself a good deal about your poor father's affairs, for they were in a sad way; and soon after, poor gentleman, he met with his death in a terrible manner."

"Terrible, indeed!" replied Radcliffe; "yet even in respect to that fatal event, concerning which a son has a right to learn every melancholy particular, I have been kept much in darkness. For heaven's sake, tell me what you know. I have not forgotten you used to be afraid to speak on this subject. But remember, I conjure you, that I am no longer a boy. In six months I shall be of age, and the master of my own actions, of my fortunes. You need, therefore, fear nothing; for I have always promised you, that should it still be your wish, you shall have the cottage, in which you say you were born, to live in, with a sufficient maintenance for your old age, when I have the power to give it."

"Would that time were come, my dear young master," said Anthony with a sigh; "for there are whiles when I think I shall never live to see it: but God's will be done—He knows what is best for us. I will tell you all you require; that is, as far as I know it myself: but 'tis a wisht tale," continued the old man, using that favourite Devonshire expression for whatever is melancholy or disagreeable—"'tis a wisht tale, and makes my heart ache when I but think upon it."

"You knew Grace-on-High Gabriel in my father's lifetime, did you not?" said Radcliffe, as a sudden recollection of that man's alluding to his father's fate crossed his mind.

"I knew him!" exclaimed Anthony. "Ay, marry, I knew him as other men did; that is, not to know him at all, though for years acquainted. He was such a dark, close, silent-tongued fellow: you might as well have attempted to get anything out of one of our old oak trees as out of him, so close was his disposition. He was a hard man, too, over the tenants and the poor; and sorely pressed on those who were for the king when the troubles broke out. But he was always a favourite with Sir John Copplestone, and people used to say, Sir John had two hands besides his own, and all governed by

one head; and those helping hands were Grace-on-High Gabriel and black Will Gubbins. But the thinking and scheming head to employ them both sat on your godfather's shoulders. Those fellows would have got me out of my place fifty times over, though Sir Walter made it, as I heard, a request on his death-bed that I might be kept in my service till his son came of age—meaning you, Master Amias—to take care of me."

"And my father," said Radcliffe, "my poor father! He met with his death, Anthony, as I have been told, on the eve of Christmas-day, when I was but three years old."

"Truly it was so," replied Anthony: "never whilst the blood warms this old heart, or the light visits these old eyes, never shall I forget it. We were all busy, and as happy as the day was long, preparing the green boughs and the fire logs, and the games, and the puddings for Christmas, when poor Sir Walter and Sir John Copplestone, who had been busied in a world of affairs with the lawyers, set off on a cold, bleak, snowy day, to ride to a place near Dartmoor, on business, that, as I heard tell, the law would have settled before Christmas-day was turned, or it would be of none effect. Well, and so they set off, having sent on Grace-on-High Gabriel before (for at that time he was no better than a blue-coated and silver-badged servitor to Sir John) to see all ready and comfortable for them at the inn where they were going to dine that day: for a poor place, I believe, it was. Well, and so, as I said, before Sir Walter and Sir John set off, and I was the man who gave them both a stirrup-cup as they sat upon their horses at the door—for I judged it was a bleak ride they were going to take, and that they would want something to keep out the cold, and neither seemed to think of it, so much were they intent upon their business—and as I gave the cup to your poor father, I shall never forget how he looked, as he said to me, 'Honest Anthony, I drink to your good health; and see that the nurse looks well after my poor boy (meaning you, Master Radcliffe), whilst I am gone; for the child has no mother, and I fear he will live to find her wanting more and more every day. Take care of him, and give him his father's blessing when he returns home;' for the maidens had taken you out, Master Radcliffe, to let you see snow-ball played, and your father could not tarry 'till you came back. And then Sir Walter gave me the cup he had emptied, and said with a smile—for he'd always a smile on his face when he spoke, and it made him look very handsome—and he said, 'Good-by, Anthony, and don't stand there bowing in the cold without your bonnet, for you're not so young a man now as you used to be:' no more I was, Master

Radcliffe, for I was then well nigh sixty, and now I'm getting on for fourscore; for what I'm telling about happened seventeen years agone come next Christmas-day eve, this same blessed year."

"You are right, Anthony," said Radcliffe, who, as the tale concerned his father, listened with deep attention to all the minute particulars thus dwelt upon by old age in relating events long since past and gone.

Anthony continued. "It was Christmas-eve; and though we wondered that Sir Walter and Sir John did not return, as they said they should be back to supper, yet we thought law business being never settled in a hurry, something might have kept them; and so we did not scruple to make merry, according to the good old way at such a season. You had been put to bed by nurse; and she, and the housekeeper, and maidens, and grooms, and all of us, had set to in the servants' hall, playing at blind hob, and hot cockles, and feasting on toast and ale, and scrambling for plums out of a dish of burning porridge—when there came such a knock on the great door! I shall never forget it—it startled us all. The very knocker spoke ill news; for the knocking was as hurried and as loud as the wind, when it sweeps down the valley of a stormy night. I misdoubted something, and I ran to open the door myself; when, the Lord have mercy upon us! how shall I tell you what I felt? The first thing I saw was Grace-on-High Gabriel and Black Will bringing in Sir Walter Radcliffe all in a gore of blood, and seemingly a corpse. Sir John Copplestone followed as white as a sheet, and seemingly almost as dead as your poor father. He could not speak; and we helped him to a chair, and gave him a cup of strong waters, whilst others gathered round poor Sir Walter, so hurried and so terrified with what they saw, that, though all lamented it, nobody seemed to know what to do for the nonce."

"Was there no immediate help procured?" said Radcliffe; "was there——"

"You shall hear," continued Anthony: "I then spoke up to the best of my sense, on such a terrible miscarriage as I saw before me; and I sent off for the barber-surgeon, for one lived at Tamerton in those days (and a well-spoken, clever fellow he was); but before he arrived Sir John Copplestone recovered breath enough to tell us all; that he and Sir Walter had been attacked by some thieves that then so infested Cornwall and Devon, specially lurking on Dartmoor—but, heaven bless us! Dartmoor never was without a gang of robbers, never since the days of Adam, I do think; for it swarms with them, even at the present time."

"But Sir John Copplestone," said Radcliffe, recalling the old man from the wanderings of his narrative. "You were about to tell me what he said."

"He said," continued Anthony, "that one of those thieves had attempted to kill him for resisting: Sir John was like enough to resist, for he was always a bold man, and would have faced the devil in his young days—and your father, he said, coming up to his assistance, got the blow meant for his friend, and he feared there was little life left in him; though, after being robbed, he had sped home as fast his two men could manage to do with the unfortunate Sir Walter. The robbery had taken place not more than a few miles from home."

"And did my father ever revive sufficiently to detail the circumstances of the robbery himself?" inquired Radcliffe.

"I don't know," answered Anthony; "some say he did, and some say he did not. All I can tell you is, that he lay for hours insensible, hanging, as it were between life and death. At last the doctor did bring him to that sort of sense that men have just before death. But what then took place I cannot tell you; for the doctor had ordered Sir Walter to be kept quiet, and so your godfather would let none of us into the room. But I think there was something done, before Sir Walter's death, about business: what it was I cannot tell. Certainly, I saw Sir John, with my own eyes, carry out of his room writing things up into the sick man's chamber; and on seeing me Sir John asked, 'what I did lurking about there? and bade me go down, and not make a noise so near the chamber of the dying gentleman.' But, the Lord help you! I was as quiet as a mouse; Grace-on-High Gabriel and Black Will, who used to come and go in and out as they liked, made more noise than ever I did, I am sure."

"But did not you carry me to my father before he died? Though I was little more than three years old, I can distinctly remember it. For it made a dreadful impression on my infant mind, seeing my father, propped up in the bed, with his head bound with a white napkin stained with blood. What he said, or if he spoke at all, I cannot recollect. But I do remember he kissed me: the kiss was cold, and struck a chill to my young heart; I can recall the feeling even at this moment. Hark!" What noise was that?

"What!" said old Anthony, "I hear nothing."

"Time has dulled your sense of hearing, Anthony," said Radcliffe; "it is the trampling of horses."

"Then I will be sworn it is your godfather come back," replied Anthony. "You must haste to meet him, for not for

worlds would I have him know on what we have been talking. He is so suspicious. I will peep out of my little window, and tell you if it is he."

Anthony rose and opened a small square pane of glass, so constructed as to open without moving the window of which it was a part. After looking through this convenient peep-hole into the court-yard of the house, he said, in a low and cautious manner, to Radcliffe, as if he feared he was actually within the hearing as well as the seeing of Sir John Copplestone, "Yes, it is himself. He is returned. I will go forward, and say you are but newly arrived; and craved of me a cup of wine to refresh your weariness, and then you shall in to him."

Anthony had advanced as far as the door; he returned, came close up to Radcliffe, took him familiarly, but kindly, by the hand, and said in an affectionate and imploring tone—"Great changes have taken place in Sir John's way of thinking and acting, since you were last here; but beware what you say to him. I know you used to be rash sometimes with him. But don't now, don't be hasty. Don't say anything to vex. Don't anger your godfather, if it is only for the sake of poor old Anthony, who loves you like his own child, and wishes to see you happy and at peace."

CHAPTER XX.

——— ——— He reads much:
He is a great observer, and he looks
Quite through the hearts of men: he loves no plays,
As thou dost, Anthony; he hears no music:
Seldom he smiles; or smiles in such a sort,
As if he mock'd himself, and scorn'd his spirit
That could be moved to smile at any thing.
SHAKSPEARE.

SIR JOHN COPPLESTONE, though of an ancient family of Devon, was not hereditarily the possessor of Warleigh; and notwithstanding, at the time we introduce him to the reader, he was a person of importance in the county, yet he had not always been thus opulent. In early life he had lived much abroad, it was said with little credit to himself; and had subsequently also indulged in a career of license and extravagance at the English court during the reign of James the First. Indeed he had so greatly reduced his means by such courses, that he was compelled to dispose of certain possessions in the north of Devon, to satisfy his creditors.

As he grew older however, the world said in respect to money he grew wiser; for though it was always averred he still at times indulged in extravagant debaucheries, he was close and mean under all circumstances of just or necessary expenditure, in which the benefit of those dependent upon him were concerned. The fact was, he was a selfish man, and grudged nothing that administered to his own gratifications; unfortunately those were under the guidance of his passions; no wonder, therefore, that his character partook of the opposite extremes of the miser and the spendthrift. However wild or prodigal he might have been, Sir John Copplestone was not destitute of sense or of abilities; and one quality at all times distinguished him—his perseverance; for he never gave up a project or an enterprise on account of its difficulty and labour.

At the time that it became so much the fashion to embark in schemes connected with the New World, he resolved to try some ventures, in the hope by so doing to repair his fallen fortunes. To begin this project required money: he had little, but he had art; and Sir John Copplestone's abilities, now called out on an affair he had at heart, soon displayed themselves in a vigorous manner, and proved that when he chose

to exert them, they were peculiarly well calculated for business of the most arduous nature: so that when Barbadoes was seized by the English, in the reign of James the First, Sir John Copplestone induced his friends (who had caught from him the spirit of enterprise) to trust him with the entire management of certain sums, with which he promised to purchase lands, and all things necessary to their cultivation, and to make these adventurers as rich as princes, by their newly acquired possessions in the West Indies.

Unfortunately for himself, Sir Walter Radcliffe (who, as old Anthony hinted in the last chapter, had some strange tie of acquaintance, besides that of blood, with Sir John Copplestone) listened to him; and, without having any knowledge of business, embarked his property in foreign speculations. Sir John sometimes had the disposal of his friends ready money in making the necessary purchases; a small profit might now and then be returned, but, on the whole, Sir Walter lost about ten times more than he gained by the schemes in which he had thus been persuaded to risk the bulk of his property; so that, at last, Fortune having completely turned her wheel, the once affluent Sir Walter Radcliffe was obliged to mortgage his paternal inheritance to the once impoverished Sir John Copplestone.

When Fortune begins to chase a man down the hill, she seldom pauses in her progress; nor did she now spare Sir Walter. He still looked to Barbadoes to repair the injuries his fortunes had sustained by ill-judged speculations in that quarter. But storms blew, and hurricanes came, and ships foundered, and merchants broke and never paid their debts, —and all these evils seemed to fasten themselves on poor Radcliffe; for everybody's ships came safe home except his, and his cottons and sugar-canes had all been destroyed in one hurricane; whilst Sir John Copplestone's were spared. Such was the state of things when Sir John professed himself generous, and never pressed upon his friend for the payment of the mortgage, though Sir Walter was most anxious to redeem it; as by the custom of mortgages at the date of our narrative they were generally made under what was called 'a set day,' that was a day named for payment; but if it did not take place, the property mortgaged became altogether and absolutely forfeited, unless it could be proved that a tender had been made to pay down the money according to agreement; when, if accepted or not, the land was not forfeited by the original possessor.

It was said, even by Sir Walter to his friends, that, in this instance, Sir John Copplestone, contrary to his usual practice,

had really acted liberally, and had not, Shylock like, insisted upon his bond; a circumstance which, according to the general opinion, accounted for that more than ordinary cordiality that subsisted between him and his relative for some months before Radcliffe's death. This melancholy event, it may readily be supposed, did not facilitate the payment of his debts; the mortgaged estate became, of course, forfeited to Sir John; and had he not acted considerately, so as to advance certain sums for the settlement of affairs in the West Indies, Sir Walter's lands in Barbadoes must have been sold to satisfy his foreign creditors: as it was, Sir John had contrived to preserve them for his deceased friend's son, for whom he stood godfather at his birth, and to whom he was left sole guardian by the father's last will and testament. It has been hinted by Anthony, that a contract of marriage (at the date of our tale, a thing almost as binding as marriage itself) had passed between Sir John Copplestone and the mother of young Radcliffe; but the lady disliking the tie, and liking much better Sir Walter, Copplestone had been bought off at the time he was low in purse, though he afterwards held it out as a threat, that he could annul the marriage of his friend if he chose to do so, by pleading this ancient contract in the spiritual court, as many a marriage had been set aside on a similar attestation of a prior claim.

This story, like all the others respecting Copplestone, was told with variations: it is possible Sir John, if he had such a contract in his hands, might once have held it *in terrorem* over his friend; but it is highly improbable he should have done so during the latter part of their acquaintance; since Sir John had himself married about two years after Sir Walter, and in one particular they both shared the same fortune; for death rendered them both widowers in a comparatively short time. Lady Radcliffe, as Anthony stated, died in childbed, and left an only son; Lady Copplestone died of the small-pox, and left an only daughter.

We have here stated, as briefly and as clearly as we could, the singular and somewhat contradictory circumstances of Sir John Copplestone's former life. What follows we can relate with more certainty, and it is not, perhaps, less remarkable, or less worthy the attention of our readers. It is well known to all persons who have studied the times of the great rebellion, and the characters those times produced, that many, especially amongst the fanatics, who had led in their youth wild, careless, or debauched lives, would suddenly forswear the error of their ways, and profess to have received such an illumination of the Holy Spirit, that even the dark features of their cha-

racter assumed light when viewed under its influences. And so zealous were many of the converted in the work of conversion, that it was hard to say which of the two they were most zealous in condemning — their old sins, or their fellow-sinners who were not yet admitted to the same illumination with themselves.

Sir John Copplestone, long after Sir Walter Radcliffe's death, at the breaking out of the troubles, professed himself one of these. Indeed, Sir John's conscience suddenly became very tender, and very much alive to the sins of his neighbours. Like the famous puritan Claxton, he was "afflicted with May-pole dancing and rioting," was horror-struck at the sight of a railed altar, or a Christmas pudding, a thing "dedicated to set days and holidays:" it was to him as full of papistry and abomination as the white surplice of the minister, or the steeple of his church; and above all, Sir John abhorred and despised that ruthless bridle, or foul muzzle of the spirit, a set form of prayer; for so did he (and all who thought with him) denounce and cry down the beautiful liturgy of our church.

However zealous Sir John might be to put down episcopacy and an established religion altogether, he seemed hardly to have made up his mind what to substitute in its place. When the parliament army routed the royalists, and got the upper hand in the west, he very suddenly became an Independent, and vowed that the Presbyterians were only one shade better than the Episcopalians, inasmuch as they had larger gifts for expounding, preaching, and prayer; but were far removed from the true spirit which Cromwell had found out was alone to be spread abroad by the sword dubbed spiritual, and so placed in the hands of his own troopers.

But here again Sir John was not steady; for he now inclined to that detestable doctrine first propagated by one Browne, the leader of those misguided people who were called after him Brownists. All persons belonging to this sect held that the guilt or innocence of any action depended not on itself, but on the manner in which it was considered by the actor; "that all things to the pure became pure," taking for the measure of this purity any wild fanatical fancy that an overheated brain, or an overstrained explanation of some insulated passage in Scripture, might suggest at the moment to a mind thus abandoned to a miserable state of delusion.

The grossest vices were practised and called pure — the most perverted doctrines were promulgated and called the word of God. The object of more than one sect was to raise the spiritual above the secular power, and to create many tyrants instead of one; to cast off all legal as well as kingly

rule, and to trample the moral law under foot. Some, less openly violent, but not less evil, acted as do those insidious destroyers who make wholesome food the medium for conveying the most deadly poison. These turned the pulpits into instruments and engines of destruction; and in that high place, where, as on the holy mountain, the law of God should have been given forth to the people as a saving law, they gave forth their own to destroy. Falsehood, fanaticism, treason, bloodshed, and rebellion poured from the lips of their pulpit orators, stirring up men's minds to disaffection, to violence, and to unrelenting hostility towards the king; till he who had governed but too meekly and too well (whose private virtues and sincere piety would universally have been admitted to adorn any age or country, but that in which he had the misfortune to live) fell; despatched by rude hands into that very grave which had been prepared for him by a band of hypocritical sectaries, a treasonable parliament, and a bold, artful, and ambitious soldier.

We have somewhat digressed to speak of the times in which Sir John Copplestone lived; but to do so is not foreign to our purpose, for such times were as a test; they shewed men in their true colours, and brought certain characters into the light, who otherwise would not have dared venture forth from the shade to which they had been consigned, and in most instances deservedly. Such a character was Sir John Copplestone, ever waiting, ever watching, and ever changing with the tide. At one time a Presbyterian, at another an Independent, now a Brownist, and now, forsooth, a waiter upon Providence! as that precious sect was called, who held themselves aloof whilst the rough cast of the game was played out, but always joined in with the winning party: so that when Sir Ralph Hopton, Sir Bevil Grenville, and Sir Nicholas Slanning, gained the day at Stratton heights, and all things seemed to go well for the king, Sir John Copplestone, like a true waiter upon his own interest (which he called Providence), began to think of making his peace with the king betimes, and actually commenced an humble negotiation for the purpose. The battle of Naseby, however, followed before Sir John's overtures could be brought to bear—a battle in which, to use the words of Clarendon, "both king and kingdom were lost:" this failure soon set him right in his politics; for judging Providence to have given up the king on that day, he waited no longer, but became a zealous supporter of the parliament,—not as a parliament in the old acceptation of the term, but as a sort of drum-head court martial, under the direction of Cromwell, where the power of the sword drew forth votes more readily than law or reason,

and freedom was crammed down the people's throats by the most base and tyrannical means.

But this military rule, this favourite offspring of the General's policy, at the date of our tale, though promising and thriving, was not yet arrived to its maturity and full growth. The king was still alive, though a prisoner and retaining nothing of royalty but the name, and that which so truly becomes a king, under all the varying circumstances of time and chance—his high resolution, his uncompromising spirit in the cause of truth, and his unfeigned trust in God, under all the calamitous circumstances of his fortunes. To bring down such a king, yet to do it with the apparent sanction of his kingdom, required a wary chase, and a wary chase was practised. Like a noble stag in a royal forest, Charles was not hunted by one pack only, but by many: no dog, however mongrel, but was welcomed to be turned loose against him; and though some could not hunt, yet, as Roderigo says, they served to fill up the cry. All were welcomed, all were upheld, who would help on the ruin of the king. He was already a prisoner, what could they do more? There was no prison more secure than his, except ing the grave, and they were eager to hurry him to that, where even their own hands could do no more, for there, that the wicked cease from troubling no one will deny. In order to forward this excellent purpose, men in all the counties of England, who were considered influential, either from their opulence, rank, or abilities, were courted by the ruling party, and Sir John Copplestone was not forgotten.

It was now that he inclined to the Independents, a set of men, generally soldiers, or of soldier-like dispositions, of a fierce, gloomy, and unrelenting humour, who saw God only in his thunders, and worshipped him with the sword; declaring that in a Christian land all were bound to uphold and practise those rules and precepts of the Jewish dispensation which had been set aside by the more perfect law of the Gospel. Thus, for instance, the laws of capital punishment denounced on witches, sorcerers, and idolaters, were held by these fanatics as binding to the world's end; no wonder, therefore, such sentiments helped to keep alive a civil war. To this sect, after so many windings and turnings, Sir John Copplestone had chiefly inclined; and it is certain that he went so far in his exertions for this party as, at one time, not only to enjoy the confidence of Fairfax and Waller, when they were at Plymouth, but also more than once to have been honoured with an especial communication from Cromwell himself.

Cromwell, it will be remembered, had a wary eye on Cornwall and Devon: well did he know that these counties had

held out to the last for the king; and that old John Arundel, in the eightieth year of his age, refused to yield Pendennis Castle, even though his king was a prisoner at Carisbrook, and had advised that it should no longer resist. The parliament party, therefore, was exceedingly well pleased when they found a man of Copplestone's abilities, fortune, and influence, at their command in so loyal a county as Devon. He was trusted and employed, made a committee man of sequestered estates, and became a very rod to the poor royalists of the neighbourhood. But the game, though promising, was not yet played out. Copplestone did not intend to do the parliament's work for nothing; he looked to "thrive by the times," and grow honest, as it might be, afterwards. A change, however, once more came over all his prospects and affairs. How it happened we cannot precisely tell; for, as usual, some said one thing, and some another; some averred he had quarreled with Fairfax, and excited the jealousy of Waller; others that Cromwell had taken offence at his too great arrogance and presumption in overstepping that line of demarcation intended to keep him as a servant, but not to admit him as a familiar. The more confident declared Sir John to be a disappointed man, and that Fairfax and Waller had clutched from him certain sequestered lands and goods, taken from royalists, on which Sir John had set both his heart and his hopes. Copplestone was naturally revengeful; and if this circumstance were true, it was enough to stir the passions of a dark and malignant mind.

Be it as it may, certain it is, notwithstanding all the risk and all the danger, this very Sir John Copplestone, the gloomy Independent and the hard-dealing member of a hated committee, was, at the period we opened this work, in actual and secret league with those bold, resolute, and gallant gentlemen who once more determined to venture life itself to free the king from his imprisonment, and to reseat him in safety and honour upon the throne. These various changes in the life and opinions of Sir John Copplestone we are aware must seem very extraordinary to our readers. But it is our business to record facts not to account for them; and did we take upon us the task of endeavouring to account for all the contradictory actions of an unprincipled man, it would be a task as endless as it is unprofitable; since a man without principle, like a ship without a rudder, ballast, or sails, is subject to be blown aside by every wind that wanders by, and no one can say to which point he will ultimately drive, or on which rock he is most likely to split, and go to pieces.

CHAPTER XXI.

——————— You shall hear me.
My father charged you in his will to give me good education: you have trained me like a peasant, obscuring and hiding from me all gentleman-like qualities: the spirit of my father grows strong in me, and I will no longer endure it: therefore allow me such exercises as may become a gentleman, or give me the poor allottery my father left me by testament; with that I will go buy my fortunes. SHAKSPEARE.

It was into the presence of such a man as we have attempted to describe in the last chapter, that young Radcliffe was now ushered by faithful Anthony, after the old servant had ventured to announce his return, in a pleading and apologetic manner, as if he feared the communication must be unwelcome.

When the mind is strongly prepossessed on any subject of anxiety, it is surprising how readily it perceives and admits the least circumstance calculated to call up its fears. So was it now with Radcliffe, as he glanced his eye round the chamber, and upon the figure of him who, connected by the threefold relations of kinsman, godfather, and guardian, should have been the first to hail his return in safety from a foreign land. Sir John Copplestone, on the contrary, sat upright in his chair, without offering to move in sign of welcome, but seemed to measure his godson with his eye in a manner indicative of high displeasure and mistrust. It was not alone by the vague reports of the world, so recently detailed by Anthony, that Amias judged his guardian; for well did he know that the mass of mankind, ever happy in any occasion of censure, though they often shun truth, welcome calumny with open arms, and such invariably, whenever any circumstance in the conduct of another admits of a good or bad interpretation, entertain that which is evil.

But the narrative of Anthony; the events it detailed, so mysteriously, so imperfectly understood; the broken yet alarming confession of the dying Gabriel, together with his own sense of his guardian's unkindness,—were all things founded on something more solid than the mere reports of idleness or malice; so that Radcliffe shuddered as (glancing his eye round the oak paneled chamber, in which his godfather sat) he per-

ceived that very red velvet cabinet, with its silver ornaments and its ponderous lock, standing behind the back of his chair. There was seated the man who, he was led to believe, was his greatest enemy, and now possessed, locked within the narrow prison of that cabinet, the very secret with which, it had been hinted, the future welfare of his own life was in some strange manner connected, whilst he could not even conjecture to what it referred, though he augured something evil, something of painful import, from the circumstances under which the mystery had been so darkly hinted to him.

There was nothing in the countenance or manner of Sir John Copplestone to re-assure him; nothing to give confidence to doubt, to dispel timidity, or to encourage the modesty natural to youth: there was nothing frank, kind, or conciliatory. Sir John Copplestone was about the middle height, powerfully limbed, and large in the chest, as well as broad in the shoulders. His head was peculiarly formed, wide across the forehead, but flat on the crown. His hair had been black, it was now grey, and so closely cut all round the head, that his ears became a prominent, and far from an agreeable feature. They were exceedingly large, and placed so forward as to have almost a ridiculous effect; for they might be said, in their position, to resemble those of a quadruped. Yet whoever looked in the countenance of Sir John felt no inclination for laughter; every line of his face, every feature that composed it, was so strongly marked, that once seen they could not readily be forgotten. There was gloom in the overhanging brow; but in the dilation of the full black eye, and in the workings of the muscles that surrounded it, a sternness which, under any sudden passion, amounted almost to ferocity of expression. At no time was his countenance agreeable; for even in its most tranquil state there was a cold, heartless, sinister character about it, never to be overcome: no circumstance, however cheering, seemed to cast over it a ray of joy. Like a savage and a barren country, the sun might shine upon it, yet it served to shew nothing pleasant, nothing attractive, even under the brightest irradiation of its beams.

Though Sir John Copplestone, after having enlisted under the banners of the godly, had turned again, and was now intriguing for the king's cause, yet he had not thrown off his pretensions to be numbered amongst the saints of the earth: humility, however, the first moral virtue of a Christian, did not seem to be of his creed; for his dark features wore an air of gloomy pride, and he never looked the person to whom he spoke in the face, unless he wished closely to observe or to awe him? At other times he had a down look, like that of a

man who is conscious his mind would not bear inspection, and feared, or felt, as if it could be read through his eyes.

In his dress, Sir John was studiously plain, and even formal. It consisted of a dark, or, as it was called, sad-coloured doublet and cloak: his falling bands were stiff with starch, and was as unbending as the disposition of the wearer. A broad and ample belt of buff leather sustained a rapier and small dagger, the latter being the only ornamented weapon ever worn by Sir John (for it was an hereditary weapon with the Copplestones, having originally belonged to him of the white spurs). The dagger hung sheathed in a crimson scabbard, richly and remarkably decorated with chased silver. His broad, high-crowned, and shadowy hat, that gave to the wearer, especially when pulled forward on the brows, an air of disguise or concealment, not at all prepossessing, lay on the oak table that stood close at his elbow; and a favourite dog, a mongrel in breed and temper, rested at his feet.

The dog, as if it understood by sympathy the likings and antipathies of his master, as Radcliffe entered, raised himself from the ground, curled up his nose, and shewing his white fangs, gave a savage growl. Copplestone silenced his favourite with a kick of the foot; and the creature, as sometimes do favourites of a higher order, took this indication of his master's notice in good part, and, again resting his head upon his two fore paws, continued to eye Radcliffe, as a gaoler may be supposed to eye his prisoner, whilst he stands in the presence of an officer (superior to himself in trust), with no intent to interfere unless it be by command, but quite ready and watchful to receive it, even should it be to fly at the delinquent's throat. Amias Radcliffe (who, although naturally of a meek as well as affectionate temper, had nevertheless in him a good share of that spirit which is generally the companion of warm affections) felt his bosom swell, and the blood rise into his cheek, at this cold and heartless reception on the part of his godfather, after so long an absence. He stood, therefore, before him with an elevated mien; and, with more than ordinary courage and composure, told Sir John Copplestone, "he had thought it good to return from Barbadoes without awaiting a recall, and therefore was he come."

Sir John's first motion seemed to be one of extreme passion: he looked as if he was about to rise and spurn his godson from his presence with contempt; but, suddenly checking himself, though evidently with an effort, he said—"Is it so, sir? and pray, as you have taken upon yourself the direction of your own conduct before the term arrives to make it lawful,

will you oblige me with your reasons for the act? I listen, sir, and wait your pleasure."

"Sir John Copplestone," said Amias, "there needs not this mockery. I have done nothing to merit it—nothing to deserve the coldness, the unkindness, with which you receive me. I know what is due to you; why, therefore, treat me thus? As my guardian and kinsman, you hold the power of my present happiness and well-being in your hand. As my godfather, your tie to me is still more sacred, since you have sworn to see me well instructed in those things that concern my hopes of happiness hereafter. I have borne all your unkindness, for years have I borne it, with patient submission. But patience, like all things else, has its date, and will be worn out at last by ill usage. My father left me entirely in your power, trusting to your faith and honour. And how have you acquitted yourself towards me in these most solemn obligations? I will speak; I am called upon to give my reasons for this return: they are manifold, and you shall hear them."

"I would hear reason, not invective," said Copplestone, warmly: "resolve me this, young man—have I, or have I not, the power over you? Is my rule, my office, to be no more than a name? But times are changed indeed! The servant would become the master; the foot the head. But it shall never be; whilst I *have* the power I *will* maintain it. Am I to be thus bearded and contradicted by a boy? Know your place, young sir, and where obedience is due, or you shall *feel* the power you despise."

"I have already felt it," replied Radcliffe; "and, though I die for it, I will no longer be silent. I have long struggled, long endured: but a very earthworm, they say, will turn, if trampled on; and I am not so low, though you would keep me groveling in the dust, but I have at least the privilege of a reptile, and if you would crush me I must rise in my own defence. You have dealt by me cruelly."

"How have I done so?" said Copplestone: "have I not cared for you even as for my own son? Keeping you here at home, till an occasion, for your own advantage, offered to send you hence?"

"You kept me here, indeed," said Radcliffe; "but as a slave, not as a son! Under the very roof that was once my own father's, the place where I first drew breath, have I been brought up in some respects worse than the meanest hind on my father's land. You sent me hence on an occasion for my own advantage! You banished me—yes, I repeat it, you banished me, and to a foreign shore. Sent me under the keeping of one who I have now reason to think was instructed

never to suffer my return; and that, too, at a time when my health was so much affected, I could scarcely exist in the climate to which you had condemned me. But I have learnt all, and I know you, Sir John Copplestone."

Radcliffe's passion betrayed him not only into warm words, but into a manner that was even yet warmer. His godfather, for a short space, remained silent, as if overpowered by surprise and wonder at this unwonted boldness in one who had always hitherto appeared to be a youth of a quiet and submissive temper. Sir John raised his head haughtily, as the expression of a dark and malicious feeling gave a fearful character to every feature of his countenance: he fixed his eye on Radcliffe with the look of a steady yet malignant purpose, like the serpent eyeing its victim before it darts its sting, and said, in a voice of deliberate yet strong passion, "You know me, did you say? what do you know of me? Speak, I command it."

Even Amias felt awed by his manner; so difficult is it to shake off old habits and feelings of submission to authority, however arbitrarily assumed; and so often does a strong spirit bear down one of gentler mould, though the latter may have both right and truth on its side. Radcliffe did not instantly reply: another motive also operated on his mind, namely, he had heard nothing positive, for all that he could bring forward would amount to no more than the half-communicated hints of a man of an evil life and conscience, labouring under the terrors of death, and, perhaps, of mental aberration; for, certain it was, Grace-on-High Gabriel had been light-headed all the night previous to his death, and, though reasonable at intervals, could scarcely be said to have recovered an entirely sound state of mind at the moment he had the last interview with his young master.

The generous are never the suspicious: unhackneyed in the ways of the world, open and sincere in his own intentions, Radcliffe felt almost self-reproach for the violence of his conduct, and thought unkind as his godfather had been to him nevertheless he had no proofs of such guilt, as Gabriel had insinuated, to fix upon him. Radcliffe did not want for courage; but courage is of a noble nature, it is freely opposed to open danger or to open guilt, but it shrinks from playing the part of an assassin either with the hand or with the tongue. Thoughts, dictated by feelings like these, passed rapidly through his mind, and he answered in a milder manner, yet with firmness—"I left Barbadoes, sir, where you sent me to look after affairs scarcely worthy the attention of a gentleman, and of which I had no experience, because I found

neither the climate suited my health nor the employment my station. The vessel in which I returned, the Old James, was wrecked on the Eddystone, whilst making for Plymouth harbour. Some few of the seamen and passengers took to the boat; it lived through a troubled sea to be stranded on the rocks at the back of Mount Edgcumbe. Myself and the servant you had placed about me were alone saved; but he received a mortal injury in reaching the shore. Our lives were preserved by the generous exertions of Sir Piers Edgcumbe and his followers. We were housed and cared for with all humanity, and Gabriel died of the hurts he had received: before his death he confessed——"

Copplestone's countenance changed at hearing this last sentence, as he hastily exclaimed, "What did he confess?"

"He confessed," continued Radcliffe, "many things, though darkly and indirectly. Some hints he let fall were of fearful import, but these were mostly spoken during his delirium. Yet openly and unequivocally did he declare that you forbade him to suffer my return (if by any means he could prevent it) to England. From what motive such a command was given he did not state; but surely this circumstance, added to other acts of injury and unkindness, is sufficient to make me feel I am not worthily treated by you. What have I done that you should have commanded my being banished from my native land for ever?"

"And how know you that I did command it?" said Copplestone. "Is the assertion of a man who, by your own account, was dying, and in the delirium of death, to be taken as a warrant for the violence, the insolence with which you have this day treated the guardian, who, by your late father's authority, stands in his place? Go to, foolish boy, and learn duty, or I must teach it you. Learn to know yourself. Young, froward, idle, and thankless, you shew yourself nothing grateful to me—to me, who have laboured for your good; and now, like the foolish son in Solomon's proverbs, you would destroy me with your mouth; but through knowledge shall the just be delivered from the railer and the hypocrite."

There is no art so easily practised as that of provocation; it is ever found as a ready weapon of attack with those who cannot stand on their own defence without danger; it is of a species with that anger which finds its use in picking a quarrel, when it would be inconvenient to hearken to a remonstrance. Even so was it now; Amias Radcliffe had justly complained of injury, and Sir John, instead of a patient hearing, or a calm vindication of himself, turned the tables, and incensed his godson by an attack when he looked for an

explanation. Once more, therefore he relapsed into his former feelings, and exclaimed, "I am no hypocrite; this is past endurance; I have escaped death in the island to which you condemned me, when I was weak in body, and that, too, at a time when the plague raged there with fearful violence. I am returned: but to what a welcome, after having been snatched from the grave! There is no need, may be, that I should have been sent forth to find one in a foreign land; it is well prepared for me at home: since what have I to hope, what have I to look for, but death? You debar me all comfort; you keep me dependent, servile, and penniless; refuse me all such allowance as becomes my birth, my inheritance, and my condition, Once have I borne arms, in obedience to your will, at the assault on Ford House; I would now bear them to satisfy my own. Give me then wherewithal, out of what must be mine in a few months, and I will equip me as becomes a gentleman, and will trouble you no more till the hour arrives when the long account of my minority must be rendered between us. This is all I ask and all I purpose."

"But I purpose other," said Copplestone haughtily, "and you shall not bear arms in that cause which has become no better than one of misrule, blood, and violence. My thoughts now are not altogether as were my former thoughts. I wish for peace and mercy, and a speedy quenching of that raging fire of rebellion, that has so long burnt throughout the land, that her green hills and her green valleys, which once laughed and sung for joy, are become full of mourning, and withered as grass thrown into the oven. I see but one way to restore peace, and that way will I pursue though the path be narrow and full of briers."

Radcliffe looked astonished. "Surely," he said, "I do not rightly understand your words, if you mean by them, that—after having so long advocated the cause of civil and religious freedom—after having yourself taken the covenant, when it was made in England, as well as in Scotland, the test of every man's principles in this war—you would now turn to the opposite side, and once more set up tyranny in that high place whence it has been cast down, at the price of so much blood; and that shed by the best and the bravest in the land."

"I would not restore tyranny," said Copplestone (who was, perhaps, glad to avail himself of this new theme of debate to avoid one on which he was less desirous to be communicative); "but I like not the way things are carried either in the parliament or in the army. I fear the General who drew his sword in God's cause now wields it for his own. Joshua, we know, warred not for himself, but to do the will of heaven.

Nor were the seven trumpets of ram's horn made to blow down the walls of Jericho, as wind raised for his own profit. I tell you, Master Amias Radcliffe, that so long as this General made war for Israel, so long did I support him, but not when he would turn it for the purposes of his own ambition. We know Achan, the son of Carmi, committed a trespass with the accursed thing, and so has this man; for he has left following the ark of the covenant to follow his own interest. I see at what mark he aims, with his agitators, and levellers, and captains, and army; I see this, and will come out from among them, that I be not defiled, and will turn me to a more open and more godly way."

"To the Cavaliers would you turn?" exclaimed Radcliffe, in great surprise. "What is it you mean?"

"What I mean you shall know hereafter," replied Copplestone; "for the present, rest satisfied that my meaning hath its consequences and its motives. And my command is that you dare not take up arms in any cause without my leave; else will I restrain you, even with the exercise of the law, which, as a guardian, is in my hand over you. You know not what has chanced in England since you left it. These men would have made a covenant with me—a covenant as full of craft as was the league made by the Gibeonites with the captain of Israel, when they came in guises full of deceit, with their old shoes and torn raiment; and went wilily, with their wine bottles new and old, and bread dry and mouldy. But Joshua, though he vowed, took them in their own snare, and made them hewers of wood and drawers of water; and in such wise shall their craft end; and so having told you a part of my design, I expect obedience to my command, and that you do not draw the sword in anywise."

Had his guardian continued this mystical expression of his political intentions and opinions all the day long, Radcliffe could not possibly have dived into his meaning; except that he guessed generally, from some extraordinary motive, Sir John Copplestone (in all things a man of mystery) was grown cold to the cause of the parliament, and had thoughts of changing his mind. He was much surprised at this, and wished to catch some word or sentence that would at least inform him to what party, when so many rent the kingdom, his guardian had finally determined to adhere.

This, however, was not designed by Sir John to make any part of the confidence he now extended to his godson; and he was preparing for a farther abuse of scriptural examples, by stringing them together so as to obscure his real meaning, whilst pretending most notably to explain it, when Radcliffe

determined not thus to be driven from the point, and once more demanded, in very plain English, and without the assistance of any orthodox text, what allowance Sir John intended to make him till he came of age; as if denied following the profession of arms in England, he had his own reasons for wishing to go abroad for a short time, till the day arrived that would make him his own master.

Sir John Copplestone, who often forgot his scriptural phraseology in moments of passion, when the natural man was seen, in spite of his acquired habits, answered with the ungodly term of a round oath, and swore that beyond bed and board at Warleigh, with some trifle to carry in his pocket, he should have none; since none was needful. This angered Radcliffe, who, at twenty years of age and upwards, and having some expectations of his own, felt that he was most shamefully trammeled; words grew on words, till Copplestone rose, in high wrath, and reproached him with what had always been a subject of bitter disappointment to his own strange, secret, and apparently unaccountable plans in regard to his godson.

"Ingrate," he exclaimed, "do you, who have treated all my fatherly care with scorn, the moment you return unbidden to my roof, now want to escape from me again before my date of wholesome rule is expired? From me you would fly, even as if I were treacherous, and would answer you as Jehu did Joram, when he said, 'Is it peace?' Jehu smote the wicked, but to you I have been full of true mercy, with a father's love and care; yet would you, like Joram, cry out, 'There is treason, O Ahaziah!' and so would depart from me. Have I not cared for you as for a son? Nay, would I not have made you my son, by giving to you my own child, my Ruth, in the rare qualities of virtue and wisdom; though she is a maiden, and not widowed, as was that blessed daughter of Israel? But you would not; and refused Gertrude Copplestone with no more grace than if she had been the lowest handmaid offered, like Hagar, as a concubine to the holy Abraham, and not as a wife. You did this; and having put this affront on my name and on my blood, you wonder why I felt wrath against you, and for awhile sent you from before my face, from my house, and the land of your birth."

"I honoured your daughter, sir," replied Radcliffe, with dignity, "too much to marry her, though she is your sole heir, and a lady excellent in wisdom and in virtue, of great beauty and equal spirit. Yet, I repeat it, I honoured her too much to give her my hand without my heart. Our affections are not always at our command; and Mistress Gertrude Cop-

plestone deserves something more than the esteem of the man who shall have the happiness to call himself her husband. I felt thankful to you for the only proposal that you ever made to me with kindness; and though I declined it from motives in which there could be no blame, I never thought myself worthy of her."

A dark scowl passed over the brow of Copplestone: he had been governed by very powerful motives in desiring the union of his daughter and his godson; and ever since Radcliffe's refusal had placed a barrier between the young man and all his own plans in regard to him, he viewed him with a jealousy and dislike that amounted almost to hatred.

Malignant minds find no satisfaction for disappointment but in revenge; and he had not hitherto spared Amias. "Thou wast not worthy of her, indeed," he said; "I know thy heart and thy disposition; it inclines not to the honourable tie of marriage: that would be a bond which, to one of thy profligate temper, would be a chain weighty as iron. No, it is to the wanton and the harlot to whom your heart inclines; to the strange woman who flattereth with her tongue, but in whose house is the way to hell: to her would you go, as void of understanding as of grace, in the twilight, in the black and dark night."

"This charge hurts me not, Sir John," said Radcliffe, "for I am innocent of it; and, at the very moment you accuse me, you know I am so. Once more I would demand what allowance I may have till the time of my coming of age; for then, Sir John Copplestone, our accounts made up, we part for ever."

"What allowance!" exclaimed Copplestone: "this house, bed, and board; I have said it, and none other shall you have. You go abroad, forsooth! you travel! what, with your debauched and loose companions! You would have wherewithal to revel, and sit late at the board; to drink profane healths over mixed wine, to call up a treble woe on your own soul, to turn mirth into riot, and instead of the song of Solomon, to hear that of some outlandish harlot, or hired twangler of a viol and a lute! whilst the cup of health is made one of fire, to unsettle the brain, inflame the blood, drown the senses, and lead on to quarrel and to murder! To meet temptations like these, you shall not travel. I will allow nothing to make you the companions of swilbowls and ranters, in whose hand the wine-cup becomes the true Circe, and changes men into swine. No, be content, stay at home; keep the house; look well to your ways, and wait till the number of your years be complete to give you license to play the fool under your own *governance,* not under mine."

Radcliffe would have replied, but Copplestone would not hear him. "I leave you now," he said: "think upon my words. I go to take order for my servant's funeral. By your account his body still lies at Mount Edgcumbe. For awhile I leave you; when we next meet I look to find you obedient. Beware what you do, or you shall rue it."

So saying, Sir John Copplestone arose, and in great wrath left Radcliffe to his meditations. Seldom had he felt so angry with his godson, for seldom had Amias given him so much cause by the bold and determined resistance he seemed inclined to make against his tyranny. Radcliffe's most comfortable reflection at this moment was, that he should soon be of age, and these persecutions, therefore, could not last long.

CHAPTER XXII.

If gold, her locks are finest gold on ground;
If silver, her fair hands are silver sheen:
But that which fairest is, but few behold,
Her mind, adorn'd with virtues manifold,

SPENSER.

RADCLIFFE, whose mind had been exceedingly agitated by the interview we have just described with his tyrannic guardian, determined to seek Gertrude Copplestone, who had always been his friend. On inquiring for her, he learnt, from old Anthony, that Sir John had spoken to his daughter previous to leaving the house, and that she was now in the garden, probably in her favourite resort. 'The Summer Bower,' that stood near the river.

To the summer bower, therefore, Radcliffe determined on going; but willing ere he saw her, to recover in some degree his composure he struck into an unfrequented path, under the shade of some old trees, where he knew that he should not be liable to interruption. He gained the banks of the river, and there he stood for a while fixed in thought, gazing on the clear blue waters as they lay spread before his view. Seen from this spot, the Tavy assumes the appearance of a lake. To an agitated spirit, there is something soothing and tranquillizing in the sight of water. He now felt the soothing effects of nature upon his disturbed feelings, as he stood contemplating the waters, so calm and beautiful in their wide expanse. Here flowing in gentle ripples with a pleasing sound against the overhanging banks, whilst the light breeze wandered amidst the thick embowering canopy of leaves, that waved above his head, and wafted in its course the fragrance of sweet flowers and herbs that were seen everywhere around: some growing in cultivated beds, and others but the spontaneous production of the soil, as they sprang up, half-hidden amid the grass, but still creeping along the bank, and growing down to the very edge of the waters.

Radcliffe's mind, long and early schooled in adversity (for his misfortunes may truly be said to have commenced with his birth when he lost his mother), was more prone to deep thought and pensive feeling than is usually found with those who have not yet numbered more than twenty summers over

their heads; and as he looked on the stilly scene before him, he thought, and truly, how vain were those toils and tumults that disturb the heart, injure the health, and fret the spirit of man in his brief passage to the tomb; and that whilst he strives and vexes his soul at every new care, nature, governed by more equal laws, holds on her course, calm and serene, alike unruffled by the busy anxieties of private men, or by the rise and fall of states and empires! The thought was not new, as, in fact, all those great truths that act on the minds of men were obvious to the earliest ages, so that there are few moral laws or just reflections concerning either individuals or on nations, in their several conditions, but may be found in the pages of Holy Writ, where even statesmen might learn, would they but think so, the best rules in all matters of government; for where can human policy hope to find so sure a guide as in those great moral laws derived from God himself for the benefit of mankind? Generations and kingdoms may flourish and pass away; customs may change, but principles never; since what was right nearly two thousand years ago remains the same to the present hour. To return from this digression.

Radcliffe, as he thus gazed on the gently rippling waters, thought of his early years, of his father, the melancholy circumstances of his fortunes and his death, and of his own painful and almost enslaved condition. He had determined to apply to Gertrude Copplestone for assistance and advice, though he knew that, as far as it concerned himself, he could not hope her interference would do him much good with his godfather; for, at the date of our narrative, the authority of a guardian was very different to what it is in the present day. It was, in fact, absolute; and so strict was the law (not even then wholly freed from its original feudal despotism) that if a person invested with such an office chose to play the tyrant, there was no hope but in submission, a runaway or obdurate ward being liable even to imprisonment; and many instances of its having been resorted to, in order to bend the spirit of the disobedient, may still be found on record. It is quite necessary to state this, that the nature of Radcliffe's fears, and of Copplestone's power, as well as tyranny, may be fully understood.

Radcliffe knew well the character of Gertrude; and though she had not excited in him that love he (in compliance with his guardian's proposal) could have wished to feel, yet he entertained for her a high respect, perhaps a little mingled with awe; and that very circumstance might have held aloof the more tender affections; for as love shuns distance, those whom we hold in awe never seem our equals; and without

some feeling of equality love cannot exist: yet, nevertheless, his respect for her many virtues, and her good sense, caused him to entertain for her something of that calm and steady affection a worthy brother feels for a deserving sister. Indeed, so sincere was this regard in the mind of Amias, that in all probability, as he grew older he might have entertained warmer feelings for the daughter of his guardian, had he not chanced to meet (during the only months he was ever absent from Warleigh, before going abroad) with an object so exactly suited to the picture of female excellence, sketched by his own imagination, that she soon excited in his youthful heart the most ardent and passionate love. Another cause also (previous to this fascination) had, probably, acted on Amias to make him somewhat indifferent to Gertrude. She had been bred up with him from childhood: they were often together in the same house, and there lived like brother and sister. Now, wherever this is the case with two young persons of opposite sexes, they seldom fall in love: growing up together, habit gives birth to tranquil regard, but not to passion; and, as even from their childish days they must see the imperfections of each other, the imagination does not play the deceiver; there is greater scope for the judgment.

Gertrude Copplestone had, in some respects, experienced misfortunes similar to Radcliffe: she had lost her mother in infancy, and had been left to the care of Sir John Copplestone, in whose character there was nothing of tenderness even for his own offspring, though it was obvious Gertrude had more influence over him than anybody else, and that he looked with considerable interest upon her, as the sole representative of his family, and the heir to all his well and ill acquired possessions. Some even went so far as to say, that though he was severe to her on certain points, where he supposed the future grandeur of his family might be concerned, yet that in other matters he really stood in awe of her, so much did he feel the ascendency of her naturally firm and high spirit. She was, indeed, a singular daughter for so strange a father; and though, as the known heiress of Warleigh, it may well be supposed she was much talked of and courted, yet there were certain circumstances respecting the father, the daughter, and the godson, that no one could exactly fathom or settle to his own satisfaction, though the matter had been a standing theme of debate with all the gossips in the neighbourhood.

The wonder was, how Sir John Copplestone, who, it was well known, had rejected many honourable and most desirable offers for his daughter, should have been so anxious to make up a match between her and his godson, when it was also well

known (for Sir John had not concealed that part of the subject) the youth's fortune would be very moderate, indeed small, owing to the embarrassed state of Sir Walter Radcliffe's affairs at the time of his death; and it was also the more extraordinary, as he had never shewn any regard to the lad, not even when he was a child, had treated him with no indulgence, and was never heard to speak of him other than in terms of actual censure or of unfeeling indifference. This circumstance was, in fact, an enigma, which no one could have solved but Sir John himself, and that he never thought proper to do; nor can it be supposed he was the sort of man to whom any person would dare propose the question.

Gertrude, both in mind and temper, far more resembled her mother and her mother's family than she did the Copplestone's, whose name she bore. Her mother had been an Elford, the sole sister of the Sir Marmaduke already known to the reader; and fortunate it was for Gertrude, that, at the time of her mother's death, no civil war existed, as the wars had afterwards severed the families; Elford taking part with the royalists, and Copplestone with the parliament; and though Sir John was now, from some secret motive, disposed to be friendly to the imprisoned king, yet he had shewn no desire whatever to renounce those hostilities that had so long subsisted between himself and the unfortunate family of Elford, ever since the commencement of these troubles. This was another strange circumstance in the conduct of Copplestone; but all his actions partook of mystery, and seeming contradiction. Those who fancied they knew his character best accounted for it by saying, that it arose from his duplicity, and because his real feelings were seldom obvious, as he had always one motive for action, but another for appearance.

When Gertrude's mother was on her deathbed, she recommended the care of her only daughter to Lady Elford, her brother's wife, a woman of the most excellent character in morals, manners, and religion. Copplestone, busied in other matters, cared not to be troubled with the education of his child; so that, though Gertrude was often at Warleigh, she nevertheless spent the greater part of her time under the fostering care of Lady Elford, who greatly advanced her improvement, and early imbued her mind with those principles that were not to be shaken by any occurrence of her after-life. She had also an original as well as a strong turn of mind, and was one of those very few people, either male or female, who dare think for themselves, yet who, when doing so, generally think rightly and act nobly.

When the civil war broke out, Gertrude's visits to her be-

loved relatives, the Elfords, were forbidden. The same sense of duty, however, that made her affectionately grateful to them, made her, likewise, obedient to her father, and she saw the Elfords no more. It grieved her soul also, to find that her own father took part with the Parliament against the King; yet, grieved as she was, she had no power over him to prevent it: she could only pray to God to shorten the evil days that had fallen upon the kingdom, and to compose that strife which thus sundered old connexions, relatives, and dearest friends; and deep, indeed, was her regret when she learnt that young Radcliffe had slain Sir Shilton Calmaday in the fatal affray of Ford House.

Yet what was that sorrow when compared to the shock she experienced on learning that her maternal uncle, the worthy Sir Marmaduke, on attempting to retake that house from the the rebels (where they held many royalists prisoners), was believed to have shot his own wife, as she accidentally rushed to the window at the moment he had given the word to fire!

Gertrude sorrowed for the loss of her excellent aunt, as if it had been for a mother: and on hearing of the melancholy state of Sir Marmaduke's mind, of his persecution and suffering, she determined in her heart, that let what would be the consequence, if ever she had the power, she would to her utmost serve or save him, though at the risk of her own life, as some requital for that debt of gratitude she felt she owed to his beloved wife, now laid in the tomb. Gertrude had high and impetuous feelings; and no sooner had this thought suggested itself to her mind, than, singular as the act certainly was, she took the Bible in her hands, and kneeling before a picture of Lady Elford that hung in her chamber (as if the semblance of her deceased relative could witness the act), she solemnly vowed on that sacred book to keep her resolution, however difficult or dangerous to herself. This was the act of a young enthusiast when under the influence of strong and excited feelings of affection; but it was an act well suited to the determined and high-resolving character of Gertrude Copplestone. Had she been a man, she would have been a hero; as a woman, she was prepared to be a sufferer: true courage is necessary for both characters; but the latter most frequently falls to the lot of woman.

Such was the character of Gertrude; yet it was a character not easily understood by the casual or mere superficial observer: her virtues lay more in acts than in words, and by some her elevation of sentiment was called pride, whilst her open sincerity was considered as a want of proper refinement or polite breeding, and her firmness on many occasions (for she

was not one who would stoop to expediency even in trifles) was sometimes mistaken for obstinacy. Such was the woman Radcliffe might probably have called his own, but for that caprice of love which too seldom keeps company with the sober pace of reason, or with the steady progress of esteem. Love is indeed wayward, and therefore, perhaps, is it that the ancients represented him as a child, and a blind child to boot, though we doubt the propriety of the latter emblem, since he is more frequently guided by the eye than by the judgment; for were love really blind, he would not so easily be dazzled, as we all know he is, by the fascinations of mere external accomplishments and beauty.

To return to Radcliffe. He now bent his steps towards the summer bower of Gertrude; it was her favourite retreat; it consisted of a little thatched building, erected after her own fancy, near the banks of the river. Here she loved to sit and muse, more especially at the evening hour, when the golden and purple hues of sunset lingered in the distant horizon, and gleamed on the deep waters as they lay hushed in silence around. At such an hour she delighted to watch the vessels, some with white sails gradually lessening and becoming obscured as they skimmed, like a water bird, swiftly and smoothly over the surface of the waves. The boats too were seen gaily gliding along: it was pleasant to sit and view them, and to watch that fairy world of shadows reflected in the waters, whose mirrowed brightness was alone disturbed by the dipping oars, or the long furrowed wake that marked the passage of the vessels as they glided on their way.

Near the summer bower, several aged trees threw their intermingling branches far and wide, and formed an embowering canopy of leaves above a walk that wound beneath their ample shade; which, though it had something of gloom in its character, was not ill suited to the deep repose and silence of the spot. Beyond, on the opposite banks of the river, arose hills clad in verdure, or waving with woods, softened by distance and studded with hamlets and cottages that gave a pleasing variety to the scene.

Such were the objects that might be viewed from the bower of Gertrude; there she passed many hours: the sight of the river, the air gently wafted by its tide, the song of birds, the green woods, the blue sky, and the feelings that her own mind experienced in their contemplation, were all such as gave her a higher and a stronger sensation of delight than she had ever known whilst listening to those enumerations of the wealth and consequence to which her father so often told her she was the sole and undivided heir.

As Radcliffe approached the spot, she saw him; and rose to bid him welcome home, in a manner that was doubly grateful to his feelings; since it was so opposite to that with which he had been received by his godfather. He soon found that she had seen Sir John Copplestone, who had communicated to her the news of his unlooked-for return. The conversation which ensued was to Radcliffe full of surprise and interest; but it demands another chapter.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Friendship is no plant of hasty growth,
Though planted in esteem's deep-fixed soil;
The gradual culture of kind intercourse
Must bring it to perfection.

JOANNA BAILLIE.

MANY of our readers, could they have seen Gertrude Copplestone at the moment she thus frankly and kindly welcomed Radcliffe home, would have thought he had shewn himself little sensible either to his own happiness or to her worth, in having missed the opportunity of calling such a woman, in the full bloom of youth and beauty, his own. Her person was tall, and replete with grace and elegance in every motion. She was attired in pale pink satin, a hood of rich point lace was drawn round the head, yet not so close but that the light sunny locks of her hair could be seen as they strayed about a neck and throat of the finest mould. A string of pearls encircled the former, and a single drop earring of the same precious orient hung amidst her small and clustering ringlets. A close grey mantle, open in front, shewed the rich embroidery of her stomacher. Her complexion was of surpassing fairness, the face a perfect oval, and the features which composed it small and delicate, the eyes grey but of uncommon lustre.

The usual expression of her countenance was playful and animated, yet, at the moment she smiled on Radcliffe, as he entered, it was that sort of smile which spoke the kindness of the disposition though there was little joy at the heart; it might be compared to the beam of a November sun, in which there is no vital warmth. "You are welcome, Amias," she said, as she held out her hand to him, "most welcome; yet I know not if I should say so, for I have seen my father since your return, and he seems not to be best pleased with it. I would you had not angered him; and at this time, too! Oh, you know not how many things I have to fear for you! Had you but heeded my former counsel, and could but have kept out of the way till these storms were blown over, all might have been well."

"I trust, my dear Gertrude, my sister, for so I hope I may still call you who were my earliest friend, I trust my guardian's

anger against me may not spread its influence to you, else should, I be friendless as well as fatherless. Let me be welcome to you, and Warleigh is still a home to me, though not the home it might have been, if your father were not so prejudiced against me. He received me but now worse than he would a dog that had forgotten its place, and stole in from the kennel to the parlour. He accused me of faults, nay even of vices, that I should blush to stain my youth with only naming. He denied me all allowance suited to my station and my birth; and would, I believe, have turned me out of doors, but that he could not do it, penniless as I am, for very shame. He says he will give me nothing, till the law gives me all on my coming of age."

"You have angered him by this uncalled-for return," said Gertrude, "and he chafes upon it. He will grow kinder when his first passionate fit has had time to cool. But I must be plain with you; and I know you have good sense enough to hear truth, and not take offence at it. You have, even from a boy, crossed my father's will by petty oppositions of temper; so that anger and prejudice conjoined have given birth to a jealousy so strong in him, that he now interprets all you do, as if it were done alone out of opposition to him."

"Wherefore should he do so?" said Radcliffe. "I have not deserved it, and it is so unjust a prejudice!"

"That is the very reason it is so deep rooted," said Gertrude: "the eye of prejudice sees all things through a false medium. If you were in yonder boat, which is now passing down the river, and only looked at the oar whilst it is dipped under water, though straight in itself, it would seem crooked to your sight, being deformed by the medium through which you viewed it; and in like manner do I much fear all your actions are seen by this unhappy prejudice you have excited in my father's mind against you. It is most unfortunate that, although you observed his will in all acts that were material, yet the manner in which you obeyed was the thing that so vexed him. Trifling oppositions of temper, if long continued, excite anger more than do acts of open rebellion to authority, so they come but rarely. You should keep more guard on your temper with my father,—and now this return, so much against his will, when a few months' patience would have led you to liberty, to the day that makes you of age."

"Those few months, Gertrude," said Radcliffe, "had I passed them in Barbadoes, where I was banished, would have led me to nothing but the grave. I came hither to tell you all my sad story, all the painful circumstances that hastened my return, and to ask counsel of you, as of a true friend, how

I best should act now that I am here. Except in one instance, I never did aught that could deserve my guardian's anger; and there, Gertrude, for your sake—for ——"

He hesitated, paused, and Gertrude spoke, though she blushed as she did so. "Nay, let not that be called an offence, my dear Amias," she said frankly: "I know to what you allude. I honour you for your sincerity, for your disinterested kindness and regard for my happiness as well as your own. We have always been as brother and sister in affection, and why should it be other! nay, why should I blush, or you hesitate to speak the truth. We have known each other from infancy, and it is not, therefore, for us to stand on those forms that with persons less intimately acquainted delicacy would demand; but delicacy must give place to truth and to common sense: what could my father dislike in you for telling him you regarded his daughter's happiness, and your own honour, more than her inheritance, and therefore you would not take her unwilling hand, nor give your own, equally averse to this forced contract, for the sake of that fortune, which would be bought something too dear, if liberty of choice were the price? We have ever been excellent friends, Amias," she continued playfully, "but we should have made bad lovers, for we never quarreled enough for such capricious beings.—Friendship, Amias, like a homely but warm cloak, wears well, and will buffet a storm; whilst love—whose emblem is most truly that of an idle boy, a pretty and sweet companion on a summer's day—love is but too apt to plume his wing and fly off when winter and adversity appear. No, Amias, sober esteem is of far more worth than passion, and are we not true friends?"

She held out her hand as she spoke, and offered it with an air of kindness, but so tempered with modesty and sweetness, that not the most sceptical in the profession of woman's friendship could have doubted her sincerity. Amias took her hand respectfully, and pressed it to his lips as he said, "Dear Gertrude, my sweet sister, for such you have ever been to me; if the most perfect esteem, a zeal to do you service, and thoughts that carry with them the most grateful remembrance; if these are feelings that can constitute the virtue called friendship, you have, indeed, a friend in Amias Radcliffe, who I trust will never fail you."

"I doubt it not," she replied; "and may be I shall put you to the proof ere we part. But first let me hear your tale, and all you would say to me; I shall then become a better counsellor; for you know even a lawyer or a physician must understand the case before he applies the remedy. Sit, Amias, and

she who was the playmate of your childhood will as attentively listen to the sorrows of your manhood, as she did to those boyish cares when you told her tales of birds that had fled their cages, strayed pointers, or hawks stolen from their perch. Sit, and tell me all."

Radcliffe did so; but, as the story of his shipwreck, and all that since befel him, is already known to the reader, we pass in silence his narrative, simply observing, that, out of delicacy to Gertrude's feelings, Radcliffe spoke very slightly of the dark hints thrown out by Gabriel; and though he did mention the ominous red velvet cabinet, he said Gabriel had alluded to it whilst he was labouring under delirium. Gertrude listened with interest and attention, in the kindest manner expressed her sympathy, and advised him to study compliance with his godfather's wishes, as far as he could do so, and to avoid all repetition of those little heats of temper that had been so offensive to Sir John Copplestone: if he observed these instructions, she thought he might hope for comfort till he became of age.

"Indeed, Gertrude," said Radcliffe, "I scarcely know how to amend these things of which you complain, because I am not conscious of having given offence; yet, for your sake, and as you advise me ——"

"I know," said Gertrude, laughing, "that whilst you ask my advice, you feel more disposed to follow your own will; for the voice that counsels us contrary to our own feelings is but like the touch of a musician, which, however skilful, sounds but ill if the instrument he strikes be out of harmony. Your mind to-day has been vexed; you are not yourself in tune, and therefore I do but seem to jar upon your feelings."

"Nay, indeed, it is not so," said Radcliffe; "I have never known you more kind to me, Gertrude, than you have been to-day; and I doubly value it, as it consoles me for the cold and stern welcome I have received from your father. And now, what is it you would tell me? Something there was you hinted I might do for you."

"My father," said Gertrude, "is much changed of late in his opinions; you know what mine have always been. Now, judge if this change in him should give me pain or pleasure."

"Surely, pleasure," said Radcliffe: "I am aware, from your early connexion with Lady Elford's family, that you have always been devoted to the king; and though I differed from you in opinion, yet I ever respected your constancy, and the honourable motives that regulated your conduct, in these remarkable times."

"Rather say miserable, faithless, wicked times," cried Ger-

trude, "and you will speak them more truly, Amias. My father's change gives me anything but pleasure, because it gives me doubt. I dare not say more. But that he who was so long adverse to the king, so bitter against all royalists, would not see even my uncle, Elford, after he had declared for the king, that he should now change! But I will say no more, for he is my father, and wherefore should I presume to doubt? I would that Charles had all hearts to a man. I would he had yours, Radcliffe; for you have a brave spirit, with just principles of honour; that, had they but been united with as high feelings of loyalty, would have constituted a character that might have challenged the world, and not have found a worthier. But, alas! though I cannot shake off old habits of regard for you, yet I know you are a rebel."

"Not, I trust, in the severe sense in which you understand the word," said Amias; "I would never have given my voice, could my voice have availed, to have thus imprisoned the king; though I would have curbed his arbitrary rule, and have banished his dishonest counsellors, courtiers, and sycophants, who battened on the public purse. These I would have wished removed: it was, in fact, with a view to serve the king by removing from him such evils, that I first joined the parliament cause. Our injured rights once restored; liberty of conscience once assured to us; equitable laws, and a free parliament——"

"And with these you would do wondrous things," said Gertrude; "so it is with you all. You would all fight against the poor king, and kill his friends and followers, to do him a benefit. Oh, hollow, hollow professions!"

"Not in me," exclaimed Radcliffe; "I am sincere."

"So you all say," cried Gertrude with warmth; "yet do I believe that you, Amias, are amongst those few who have acted more from want of judgment than want of honesty; I do not think you would advocate that system of betrayal in cold blood, that treachery, now so much in fashion with both saints and sinners in the parliament cause."

"Treachery is a vice that would disgrace any cause," said Radcliffe; "I am, I hope, the last to advocate or to practise it.

"I believe you," said Gertrude, "and, therefore, am I about to trust you. I shall tell you some strange things, Master Radcliffe; yet you must forbear to ask me whence comes my knowledge of them; and, above all, you must be faithful."

"Put me to the proof," said Radcliffe, "and I hope I shall not disappoint your confidence, nor the reliance you place on my honour. What assurance can I give?"

"The act will be the best assurance," said Gertrude; "O Amias! this heart of mine is very heavy, for it is loaded with the consciousness of many things it must not utter; yet they are grievous! What I can do, however, I will do. Will you bear a letter for me, and to an enemy?"

"If it be only at the risk of life, my honour safe, I will meet any enemy at your command, so much do I hold myself bound to you."

"The enemy I would have you meet is a dear one; if I mistake not, an enemy to your repose—Mistress Agnes Piper is the foe I mean."

Radcliffe became much agitated: he looked confused, and knew not what to answer.

"I have heard all that affair Master Amias, from a friend of mine, who knew both you and her whilst you were at Exeter, the only time you were ever absent from Warleigh before you went abroad. I have heard the tale; but I promise you I have not betrayed it to your godfather; and, if my informant spoke truth, you were not likely to tell Sir John yourself. I understood that you rendered the lady a great service, by saving her life when a pleasure barge was upset on the river Ex. Her father's politics, being very warm in the king's cause, I was also given to understand, forbade all attempts at your seeking his approval; though my friend said, the world considered that you would renew your suit when you came of age. I do not inquire your purpose; though for your sake, if such it be, I wish it success. You have nothing to fear from what I have learned of your secret, and I do not think that my father even suspects it. May I ask if you are acquainted with Sir Hugh Piper?"

"No—that is, yes," said Radcliffe; "I mean that I never saw him but once; he happened to be at Mount Edgcumbe when, as I but now related, Sir Piers by his humane exertions saved me from death."

"I understand you," said Gertrude; "you have seen Sir Hugh Piper, but you have never seen him yet in the character of a suitor to his daughter."

Radcliffe made no reply; he was evidently much embarrassed.

"Well, no matter," continued Gertrude, "what I would have done, may be quite as easily accomplished, and perhaps, better, without your seeing him; for if Sir Hugh suspected the letter I shall send him came through your hands, it might excite suspicion, on account of the rebel cause you have espoused. Hear me; I will be brief. You must see Mistress Agnes Piper, whatever be the event, before to-morrow. Give

her that letter, and tell her, that, as she values her father's safety and her own, the safety of all that is dear to her, to place it in his chamber, where he will be certain to receive it. But not a word as to the messenger, Radcliffe; I trust to your honour that you will impress this to on her mind; for if I am found to act in it, you know not to what fearful dangers I shall stand exposed, to serve the father of your Agnes. Will you promise me?"

"I do most faithfully promise," said Radcliffe," and I will perform my promise. Sir Hugh Piper shall have the letter."

"I do not think he will neglect the subject of it," said Gertrude. "More I must not say. Your silence is my security. For the rest, I believe that Mistress Agnes Piper, who seems to win all hearts, has captivated that of my cousin Reginald Elford. Do you know him, Master Radcliffe?"

Radcliffe was again confused, and said, that while Mistress Agnes Piper lived under the care of her aged relative at Exeter, himself and Reginald Elford, who also visited at her house, sometimes had chanced to meet.

"I see it," said the quick-eyed Gertrude, as she looked on his varying colour and the grave expression of his countenance, "I see it, you were rivals. Who had the most success? But I will not ask," she added laughingly, "for I have no right to inquire. However, it is in my power to put your generosity to the test, and to tell you that you may caution Mistress Agnes, should she chance to see your rival, my cousin Reginald, that he must beware of one Captain Coleman; who, if I have heard aright, saw young Elford very lately in this neighbourhood, and is like to do him no good; for Coleman is, I think, a vile character: he was once a Royalist; what he now is, I suspect, but must not speak, as he sometimes holds interviews with—I will not say whom."

"You seem to possess extraordinary intelligence indeed," said Radcliffe; "yet you communicate so little of it, and that so darkly, that did I not know your strong mind is not to be frighted by shadows, I should say you imagined dangers, and then acted as if they were realities."

"Oh, Sir, believe me," said Gertude, "I am not to be frighted by shadows; what I say, and what I do, have foundation in strong probability, if not in absolute assurance. But remember your promise; you must obey me without inquiry. I will go into the house, and ere the day is past, you shall see me again. Will you also, should you find opportunity, warn my cousin Elford of what I named to you?"

"Assuredly I will," said Radcliffe, "as I would warn even my enemy against private malice and treachery. For Reginald

Elford, I confess, I can have no particular regard, since that unhappy day we were opposed to each other at Ford House, when he fought on the side of the King, and I on that of the Parliament. From that time he has sought, on every opportunity, to shew me a degree of hatred the most marked and irritating: yet I know him to be excellent in action; brave, generous, and devoted to the cause he has espoused. However much he may be my enemy, I were loth to see him betrayed, though I have reasons that should, perhaps, make me less anxious for his welfare."

He paused a moment, and then added, as he looked on Gertrude, "But it is you who feel an interest for him, and you shall find I will faithfully discharge the trust you have placed in my hands. In the interval, may I hope for your intercession with my godfather, that he would make me some allowance suited to my birth and my condition, as the only son of the once noble Sir Walter Radcliffe?"

"I will promise to do all I can," said Gertrude; "but, alas! Amias, you know not how sadly these changing times have altered my father. He is grown stern and harsh even to me. Since you left England (so unhappy have I been), for days together I have passed my hours in this spot, taking refuge in solitude from company that was painful to me. Here I sit, and here for awhile I can forget what preys on my mind, so much does nature under most circumstances of agitation sooth and harmonize our feelings to a resemblance of its own tranquillity. When you recollect all that has chanced; my lonely state, my aunt, who was as a mother to me, miserably slain, possibly by the hand of my beloved uncle, and he now scarcely better than a maniac; his gallant son in hourly danger, I fear even for his life; my father's strange conduct, his sudden change of opinion, the miseries that surround us—when all these sorrows are remembered, can you wonder that I sometimes feel sad, and, like many who suffer in the good cause, seek consolation in pouring out my complaints to a friendly ear, even though his opinions be in opposition to my own."

Radcliffe assured Gertrude of his warmest sympathy; and offered her such services as he could render, with a kindness and zeal that did him honour.

Gertrude arose to return into the house. Some other conversation passed as they walked on together. She talked, and he listened with gratitude to those assurances she gave him of the deep interest she took in his welfare. Thus was a feeling of old times and of old confidence once more established between them.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Soon their crude notions with each other fought:
The adverse sect deny'd what this had taught;
And he at length the ampliest triumph gain'd,
Who contradicted what the last maintain'd.
PRIOR's *Solomon.*

BEFORE we state the particular circumstances that will form the subject of this chapter, it becomes necessary we should say a word or two respecting the state of religious parties in England, and more especially in the West, at the date of our narrative. It is well known that, from the very beginning of the troubles, there was a spirit of hostility against the Established church; and though it first shewed itself under the specious pretext of reforming its abuses, yet nothing less than its total subversion would content the factious and rapacious demagogues, who thirsted for the spoils that would result from its destruction. Not, however, daring to pull down the venerable fabric at once, they began by making an attack on its outworks, by abolishing all "externals of its worship," those decent and devout ceremonies, which they pleased to call idolatrous and superstitious, having recourse for all they did to the Scriptures; so that there was not a cross torn down, a painted window smashed in, a Prayer-book burnt, nor a learned and reverend divine turned adrift, or suffered to die from want and cruelty, but Holy Writ, by perversion and fanaticism, was made to supply an authority for the act. It was a grievous thing thus to see the word of God resorted to for arguments to destroy the very church which was founded upon it. Texts from the Bible, thus employed by factious spirits and infuriated fanatics, became as fuel to fire; it was as if a brand had been snatched from the altar of the sacrifice to burn the temple itself.

The Parliament had encouraged and protected the most unconstitutional and riotous meetings, for the sake of getting up petitions to be presented to itself, against what was termed the "monstrous tyranny of bishops." Bishops accordingly were set aside, and with them all church government, as the first great step towards the subversion of civil government, vested in the ancient authority of the laws, and in the sacred person of the King. The pulling down of bishops had been followed

by discarding the Book of Common Prayer, and that liturgy, which set forth in language, as beautiful as it was scriptural, all the wants, the frailties, the confessions, and the supplications of man, to be offered in the weakness of his condition, but in the strength of his faith, to the throne of Mercy! This was branded and cast out, as papal, heretical, and abominable; and even the private use of those prayers was interdicted, with penalties as severe as they were unmitigable.

Notwithstanding this, many reverend divines and pious individuals still continued to pray to their God in the language of reason and of truth; though by so doing, like Daniel, in the house of the infidel king, they subjected themselves to cruelty and persecution. Committees in large towns were appointed to hunt out, fine and imprison the laity who still followed their old pastors, and "clergy baiting," as well as seeking out malignants (who kept back any part of their property uncompounded for with the committee), became a lucrative trade with many of the lawyers and miscreants of the time; such, however, among the former were generally found numbered with the most worthless and contemptible of their profession.

In Cornwall and Devon, ever loyal to the King and true to the Church, it was long before fanaticism gained or maintained a footing; at length it was planted by the terror of the sword; for after the surrender of Exeter to Fairfax, there was not a clergyman but was turned out of his living by violence, to give place to the parliament preachers; and in many instances to the low, to the ignorant, and the vile. Yet even these did not agree among themselves, but were split up into all the endless varieties of factious disputants and fanatical schismatics. The Directory had been established by act of parliament in place of the Book of Common Prayer; a sort of spiritual militia had been set up in every county, liable to be called out whenever any measures contemplated by the great agitators of the kingdom might require their propagation, to be aided by the thunders of the pulpit. Such preachers were, in fact, compared to trumpeters, who mustered the people as readily and as effectually as did ever the well-known sound of "boot and saddle," the call for a troop of horse; both calls being for action, and both often raised on a false alarm.

The Independents, who had joined with the most zealous in crying out against the tyranny of the Church till they had subverted its government, now began to find that the Presbyterians, when they had the power, as well as the high Calvinists, were quite as fond of discipline and something more fond of intolerance than ever the Church had been, even

in her proudest days. The Independents, therefore, called loudly for freedom of conscience; whilst the Presbyterians left no measure unattempted to obtain an ordinance to check such license, and all toleration that was, as they deemed it, contrary to the word of God; or rather to what they chose to call such, as set forth with their own comments. Great and general was the confusion that prevailed among the sectaries; but, as the Independents were principally found amongst those who wore "buff and bandelier," and were more likely to forward the views of Cromwell in the destruction of the monarchy than their opponents, they were therefore the most encouraged, and finally triumphed alike over the Church, the Parliament, and the King. These remarks will be found not misplaced; as without them the reader (who may not be familiarly acquainted with the times of which we write) could scarcely comprehend the motives and the causes that led to such scenes as we shall hereafter detail in the course of this work.

Whilst changes and reformation had been the fashion of the day, the Commons ordered a proclamation of King James the First (commonly called the Book of Sports) to be burnt by the hangman. This proclamation had originally been set forth to tolerate the athletic and manly sports of England on the Sabbath-day, in opposition to the spirit of puritanism, which, in his time, was a growing evil. But when more than half the kingdom turned godly, and set about ruling and legislating in the seventeenth century, and in the land of England, as if they had been "wanderers in the land of Canaan," we cannot wonder such a proclamation should have been condemned; but to commit its degradation to the hand of the common executioner of the laws was an unnecessary insult, not to be endured by the loyal and well-affected gentlemen of the kingdom; and so much was it felt to be an insult, that, in some parts of the west of England, the putting down Revel Sunday, the extirpation of profane Maypoles and unsanctified dancing and fiddling, were acts as warmly resented by the gentry (who cared not about the things themselves, but about the manner of their suppression), as any other absolute and declared act of open rebellion.

It may here, also, not be improper to observe, that Revel Sunday had its origin in very ancient times, and was nothing more than a feast held in memory of the foundation of the parish church, and its dedication to the patron saint. In the course of years, however, the origin, but not the merry-making, of the custom was forgotten; so that its not being found always convenient to observe the revel on the saint's day (especially if it fell in the time of harvest) was allowed

by authority to be a sufficient cause for observing it on the next Sunday following the saint's day of dedication.

In former ages, persons assembled on the eve of the day, when prayers and hymns occupied the whole night; hence were these festivals called wakes, a name by which they are still distinguished in many parts of England, though the observance of the vigil has for centuries been abolished.

Revel Sunday, in the days of Charles the First, was nothing more than a great merry-making, or fair, that had its origin in the religious custom just cited. The godly attacked it on the score of breaking the Sabbath; and had they always been as reasonable in putting down abuses as in this case, their measures would have deserved praise instead of blame; for nothing is more certain than that these revels were of any but a nature fitted to the devotion, the repose, and the harmless recreations of the seventh day. King James, and afterwards King Charles, however, did not think so; and the former resolved to give them royal countenance in defiance of the Puritans: the words of his proclamation, commonly called the Book of Sports, ran thus—"His Majesty finds, that, under pretext of taking away abuses, there hath been a general forbidding, not only of ordinary meetings, but of the feasts of the dedication of the churches, commonly called wakes, or revels; now his Majesty's express will and pleasure is, that these feasts, with others, shall be observed throughout the kingdom," etc.

In many parts of Devon, Revel Sunday (a custom certainly more honoured in the breach than the observance) is even to this day maintained. We do not wish to advocate it; but some allowance must be made for those who, at the time of our narrative, saw with just indignation the holy offices of the church on the Sabbath, and the rude games of the populace, confounded together and abolished by those very men who scrupled not to find employment for the Sabbath-day themselves, that would have disgraced any day in the week, even in a heathen calendar.

Now it so chanced that on the Sunday following Grace-on-High Gabriel's death (who was to be buried at Tamerton), as ill-luck would have it, the ancient rite of Revel Sunday was likewise to be held on Tamerton Green, which stood close without the churchyard. A large concourse of people was expected to be present; as a report had prevailed that an attempt would be made, by order of Colonel Holbourn, then stationed at Plymouth, to put down the revel by force of arms. Another report was also whispered, that a certain number of malignant gentlemen, or cavaliers, true in loyalty, and anxious once more to stir up all hearts in the west in the cause of King

Charles, had determined, under pretext of supporting Revel Sunday, in opposition to the parliament troopers, to try the temper of the yeomanry and peasantry on that day; and to judge, by the warmth or coolness with which they expressed themselves towards the ruling powers, how far they might be relied upon to assist in a general rising for the King.

Revel Sunday on this occasion was, in fact, to be made a test, and no man was to be considered efficient, unless he came forward willingly to hold the revel and its rites in contempt of the parliamentary ordinance. Thus were death and rejoicing to become neighbours together; for whilst the revel would be at its height on the village green the burial would take place in the churchyard hard by the sports.

The funeral was, of course, to be regulated according to the Directory, which permitted the mourning train, and all other outward decencies or distinctions, from the highest to the lowest, in the ceremony attending the interment of the dead. A set form of service had been done away with as idolatrous and superstitious; but if a minister chose to follow the corpse in company with its attendants, no objection was to be made to it. Meditation on the mortality so apparent before their eyes was held as a convenient exercise at such an hour; and a word in season, pronounced over the grave by the divine himself, or by a devout brother or sister, was a thing left entirely to the discretion or inclinations of the parties concerned.

Thus having put the reader in possession of our preface, we proceed to the subject itself. On the morning of Revel Sunday, great was the stir in the little village of Tamerton Foliot; as it was the custom of the festival to invite all friends and kindred, far and near, who would come to share in its pleasures and its riot. Farmers, with their men, were seen flocking towards the great rendezvous at an early hour, each dressed in his Sunday clothes, trudging along in hob-nailed and "clouted shonne," with a nosegay in his bosom, and a cudgel in his hand. Nor were the wives and daughters, or servants, behind them in the road. Many a good wife, and many a cherry-cheeked maiden, appeared in all the bustling gaiety of the day, with top-knots and ribbons waving like banners in the wind: their Sunday and coloured camlets and stuffs, and their best handkerchiefs and caps of *lochram*, white as driven snow, with all other little matters of rustic finery, being arranged in the nicest order, were seen in variety and profusion to rival the very nosegays they carried in their hands. Their blue stockings covered many a taper ankle; and their stout shoes, that buckled across the instep, were thought to be no impediment to the animation and light step of the anticipated dance.

The neighbouring Cavaliers did not neglect to send some of their own tenants or followers to mingle among the peasantry, and as opportunity might serve to encourage a spirit of loyalty by an appropriate song, or a health to the King. It was amusing to look on the tide of human beings as it set in towards the revel. The farmers discussed their own peculiar matters, or kept their boys and girls in order, if they were disposed to become too frolicsome upon the road; whilst the followers of the Cavaliers divided themselves, and mingled with the tide, now joining some party of substantial yeomen, and venturing a political conjecture on the great benefit the King's freedom and restoration would, in all probability, become to the markets for corn, oats, and hay; or as a more sure mode of exciting a rising spirit of loyalty, they made their first attacks on the weakest point—through the hearts of their pretty daughters and their wives. And here they met with decided success; for as women are generally frank and zealous in their expressions, in proportion as they are more or less warm-hearted, so are they less cautious than men in giving vent to their opinions: good wishes for King Charles were now, therefore, heard all around, not spoken in *sotto voce*, but with full voice, and in the positive accents of broad Devonshire.

These loyal expressions, however, on the part of the women, did not altogether pass without reprehension, since the godly in the little village of Tamerton were governed in all things spiritual by a singular triumvirate; namely, by a preciously gifted tailor; by a stout fellow, who exercised the double trades of cobbler and collar maker, and by a rosy old alewife, who was full of the spirit of doctrine and of discourse. These pious persons, seeing the state of things, and what sort of ungodly work was likely to be the order of the day, instead of coming out from the abominations they abhorred, rather came into them; and had already stationed themselves on the wayside to cry aloud, and spare not, to all the filthy and profane idolaters who were seen advancing towards the general rendezvous of the great sacrifice which was on that day to be offered up on the altar of Beelzebub, in the festival of Revel Sunday. With these the name of King Charles was as the name of Dagon, and no one uttered it in their hearing without an admonition or reproof that was sometimes received with a stare of wonder, at others with peals of laughter, and now and then with an oath, or a cuff that when the tailor was attacked was meekly taken by the monitor.

The little public-house of Tamerton, hung, on the occasion, with green boughs like Christmas, was filled to overflow, and

that at an early hour. Not only was the kitchen, the sanded parlour, and the garden full of guests, but the porch was also crammed, and the long benches that had been set out of doors retained no vacant place for any new comer.

Tankards of ale and stoups of strong waters went briskly round, and the smoke that rolled in clouds above their heads shewed that wherever the counter blast of King James might have been admitted with due effect, it most probably had never reached the rustic precincts of the Tamerton oak; as there the good people smoked away from morning till night on all occasions of rejoicing. There was but one cottage that stood near the celebrated tree, or the inn that bore its name, and that cottage was Mistress Raleigh's. She was alone with her little girl, though she was expecting a guest, concerning whom we shall have a word or two to say in due time and place. On this day the tree itself was a conspicuous object. Round its spacious trunk the most distinguished sellers of gilt gingerbread, lollypops, kites, and penny whistles, had taken their stand. Many a little red pennant was seen floating above the sea of green boughs; and sprigs of the same oak were worn in hats and bonnets, as tokens that they who so bore them were "Tamerton folk," and would uphold alike the rejoicings and ancient customs of their town, that being rather a grand appellation for so small a spot; but the word town in Devonshire is not confined to the number or extent of the streets and houses. We have known it applied to many a place that could not boast more than one or two cottages, if near a church.

On this day, around the Tamerton oak, were assembled persons of all kinds and descriptions. For here, beneath its boughs and seated on one of its twisting and upstarting roots, sat an old blind fiddler, who fearing no dangers he could not see, was consequently very bold; and played up right merrily the loyal tune of "A cheerful heart for the King," as a long-licensed fool (though out of place since the times had grown serious, but without growing wise), appeared in his threadbare motley, and kept company to the fiddler's tune with the words sung in full and high voice, whilst he held a begging cap to any who might be charitably disposed, to drop a tester or a sous for his song or his necessities.

Near him stood an old Jew frippery merchant, and a pedlar of note in the west, who each extolled his goods with the true laudatory tone of the profession; not at all abashed or disturbed by the cant of a puritan beggar, who stood almost at their elbow, preaching and beseeching the consideration of the charitable rather to take pity on godliness and need, than

to pamper vanity and knavery in the purchase of their follies. The popular games of the time were not forgotten; merelles, nine men's morris (a play not unlike skittles), tempted many a boor to try his luck for the value of a "pottle of cocked ale," whilst casting the goose or a shut up of the fox was the more favourite sport with the younger farmers. Wrestling and cudgeling were not to take their turn till ale had warmed the blood to a more spirited trial of skill; when a dance at the morris, and the "kissing romp," as it was called in Devon among the girls, were sure to follow as a sort of summing up of these unhallowed profanations of the Sabbath; which that Solomon of modern times (and few sovereigns had more wisdom in his head if not his practice), King James, determined to patronise and protect for the delight and benefit of his people. Could his royal ghost have been suffered, on the day we are describing, to have visited the green of Tamerton, truly the spirit would have been satisfied, for he would have found no set of persons throughout the whole kingdom more willing or more ready to shew entire obedience to his ordinance respecting the Book of Sports, by being as drunk, as riotous, and as merry as they could possibly contrive to be between the cock-crowing and sun-setting of that day.

Amongst those who were taking a noggin of ale to refresh themselves after the morning's walk to the revel, might be seen Trim Foretop the barber, his wife, and the noted Captain Coleman; the latter somewhat more silent and chop-fallen than so valiant a person was wont to be. All was business and bustle: a bowl of fermity, toast and ale, and cheese and scald cream and squab-pies, stood on the table for the morning's meal; whilst the everlasting tobacco fumed high and cloudy as an offering of incense from the Tamerton ale-bench to the god of good cheer.

All was noise, all was pleasure: the men talked loud, the women chattered like magpies, and the girls giggled, whilst peals of laughter, bouncing healths, the rattling of pottle pots, and the jingling of pewter, kept pace to the squeaking of the fiddle without doors, and the call to the drawer within, which was ceaseless and wearisome, "to bring up more ale." Indeed, at the date of our tale, drunkenness was a vice that had increased to a fearful extent. Some men got drunk for joy of the times, others for grief of them; many from wild zeal, not a few from desperation. Some because they had wherewithal to spend, others because they had spent all, and now tippled on credit.

If there was a meeting to be held, or a discussion to take place on the merits of a political question, or the character of

a malignant, or what was of more consequence, of his land and possessions, or the fitness of a parsonage to be seized upon, and its minister turned out to starve, the ale-bench became the court for judge and jury on all such occasions, and there would men sit; and whilst every tinkering fellow made his mouth, like the tunnel of a chimney, to send out smoke, neither king, clergy, nor state, escaped his pot-valiant censure.

CHAPTER XXV.

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,
Where heaves the turf in many a mouldering heap,
Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

GRAY.

THINGS were pretty much in the condition we have described in the village of Tamerton, when Margery Ridler, the mistress of the little hostelry yclept the Oak, suddenly recollecting herself in the midst of giving many very hasty directions as to serving and being served, exclaimed: "Here, John drawer! man, run into the back yard, and turn round the beehives, for there's a corpse a coming along to be buried this morning; and if the body passes my door afore it is done, as sure as my name's Margery, the bees will stray; for he that's dead and gone, and to be brought to his long home this blessed day, gave me those very bees before he went roving away to outlandish places. And now, alack, he's dead and gone, and the bees won't stay without they're turned sunways, to keep 'em from flitting after the spirit that gave 'em. Heigh-ho, death's a terrible thing to be sure; John, don't you hear Farmer Ash calling out for more ale? But stay, I'll go serve myself; for the bees must be turned, and a spirit won't wait for you, though you be drawer to the Tamerton Oak. So go and do as I bid you, and don't loiter on the way."

This order for the truly ancient custom of turning round the beehives, before the passing of a corpse, was the first intimation received at the Oak that the funeral train of Grace-on-high Gabriel was advancing to the churchyard. No bell tolled, for that custom was amongst the church ordinances put down under the sweeping clause of "idolatrous and superstitious," in the reforming Directory. The revellers, who had already commenced their merriment on the green, and the tipplers of the public-house, shewed no inclination to desist on the approach of this lugubrious procession: some heeded it not at all, whilst others only looked idly on, as they would at any other passing shew that caught their eye for the moment.

One party, however, who were amongst the gentry assembled, or assembling from every quarter, to look on or to take part in the sports, drew up their horses, and seemed to con-

template the melancholy train with a silence and decency suited to the occasion. A lady also, who rode near, and wore a mantle and black mask over her face (the common riding-dress of the period), dismounted, and giving her horse to a lad who was in attendance upon her, entered the cottage of Mistress Raleigh. By this time a number of young gentlemen, distinguished by the well-known title of Cavaliers, had arrived on the green. There was something dark and frowning in their brows, as if they did not bring with them, to a public rejoicing, the sort of spirit most calculated to share in it.

In the meantime the funeral procession drew nearer; it was perfectly plain, grave, and decent, and accompanied by all those customs the spirit of puritan reformation had still spared to the burial rites of the departed. Foremost walked the parish beadle, carrying his high and silver-headed staff, with which he very unceremoniously cleared the way by driving back the people, and rapping on the shoulders or the head the wondering and gazing mob of little boys that crossed his path as they looked on. Next came Hezekiah Hornbuckle, dressed in his Geneva cloak of blue, his Bible in his hand, and a large sprig of rosemary stuck in the button-hole of his cloak.

The coffin next approached: it was borne "under-hand," as it is called in Devonshire; that is, carried by bearers, about a foot from the ground, by napkins passed through the coffin-rings. It was of plain oak, covered by a long black pall, or mort-cloth. The feet were carried foremost, and on the pall might be seen a sprig of rosemary, of yew, and of bays, the usual "dressings of the dead."

After the coffin walked the "close mourners;" persons who were wrapped in long black cloaks, and had been shut in the room with the corpse, not mingling with the other attendants of the dead, till all moved together to follow the burial. Every one of these had received, according to the ancient English custom, gloves and a scarf, together with a sprig of rosemary, which, carried in the hand, was to be thrown upon the coffin as the earth was about to close on it for ever.

The good Hezekiah Hornbuckle, who knew that, according to the Directory, he was allowed to say "a word in season," thought it never could be otherwise when he was about to preach, even did he utter five hundred words on such an occasion as the present. Coming, therefore, near the gay, the noisy, the smoking, and quaffing groups on the green, he groaned at a sight so truly unfitting the solemnity of the Sabbath and the burial of the dead; and as Master Beadle here found some interruption, and plenty to do in clearing about him to make way for the procession, the bearers were

compelled to stop for a few moments till the road was rendered passable.

Hezekiah seized on the opportunity afforded by this brief pause to speak the word: it was, indeed, in season; for seeing the oak, and the riot that was going on beneath its green boughs, he said, "Alas! for the land! what is it I see? So near the churchyard, that universal grave, and on the Sabbath, too! to bring profaneness and popish foolishness into this place, and at such a time! It grieves my inmost soul to see it. There they stand, old and young, men, women, and children, advancing and setting up the solemn feasts of heathens, of idolatery; making Sabbath holiness to give way to riot, and to tippling, and to dalliance, and to dancing, and under that very aged oak tree to hearken to profane fiddling! How different, methinks, brethren, should be the thoughts of the heart suggested by that noble chief of the forest, and his host of green boughs. For should ye not rather be minded of your latter end as ye look upon it, and think how Deborah, the nurse of godly Rebecca, died, and was buried in Beth-el —under, even under the oak, near the cave of Machpelah; and the name of it was called Allon-bacuth. But, alas! for the time, age and darkness sit under this oak tree, for there sits an old man and a blind; but, like Satan, he uses time and his own misery to draw, by his fiddling on the Sabbath, others into evil."

Here Hezekiah again groaned; and the beadle having pretty well cleared the way, the funeral procession prepared to move on. Hezekiah had a word on so doing, and not less in season; for chancing to drop his rosemary sprig out of his button-hole, he stooped and picked it up, and as he did so said—"Friends, these green herbs that wither not like more fair but less enduring flowers of the field, should be to us as signs and symbols. We receive them at funerals, and wherefore do we so? not for idle vanities, I trow; but that they being herbs which fade not for a long season after the plucking, they should put us in memory that this day's solemnity, also, lose not presently its effects upon ourselves, but carrying the memory and the witness of it always in our minds, it may become fruitful to us hereafter. Now, good friends, set on to the grave."

They did so, and at length made their way through the throng, and reached the churchyard, where a large body of persons stood gazing, and some amongst them, by the dark and contemptuous looks with which they eyed the minister and his attendants, seemed not ill disposed to pick a quarrel. Indeed it occurred to Hezekiah that they were stationed there

for the purpose; yet still he determined to do his duty let what would follow, and to speak not only the word in season, but if necessary, the word of reproof, without fear or apprehension.

The grave, it was observed by one of these, in a scoffing manner, had been dug on the north side of the church; "a proper place for him," the scoffer said, "who was to be buried there." Indeed, the north side for the interment of a corpse had long been held in contempt, since ancient superstition had consigned to it all unbaptized infants, felons, excommunicated persons, and such as had died by their own hands, and who by some good luck escaped the cross roads, from the ignorance or the mercy of an inquest.

However dark and lowering might be the appearance of those who stood about the grave, they did not at the first offer any disturbance to the ceremony; and the coffin was lowered into the ground in solemn silence. The sprigs of rosemary were thrown upon it; and the mourners, who evinced no particular signs of grief, more than those "outward shows" for which they were solely indebted to their long black cloaks, were preparing to depart, when Hezekiah motioned with his hand that he was about to speak, and finally thus addressed them:—

"Stay awhile, friends; turn not away, for I have a word for you. Yonder is revelling—here is death. Go not then to the house of feasting, but stay by that of mourning. Pause on the brink of this grave, and think upon your own, and how soon the earth may be broken, to make one for you. The great in place, the holy in life, the innocent or the sinner, must all taste the bitterness of death."

As the good Hezekiah thus feelingly addressed his auditory, stillness and attention seemed to possess all those who stood around him; and many who came for a worse purpose, or possibly for no purpose at all, felt something within them that stirred their souls to listen and to profit, as they looked on "the gates of death" rather than to hasten back to the noise and the revelry around the oak.

"Oh, that I had words," continued Hezekiah, "that, like those of the sweet singer of Israel, could charm your ears to listen to me. And what is this life that we should so lament it? Holy Job shall tell you, that you are as stubble before the wind, and as the chaff that the storm carrieth away. Both the dead and the living shall testify this truth. Oh, look on man in his beauty; look on that eye of lustre, and on those locks of gold, strong as Samson's in his youth, and in his might; look again in a little while, and they shall become in the very

whiteness of their hairs as a witness against him! Would you then, young man, ask me where is death? truly do I answer, he is in thee and about thee—in thy fierce passions and eager vices; there he rages and he reigns. In thy quarrels, thy impiety, thy wanton thoughts; for these are but like the armour of Saul, of no avail to thee in that terrible day, when God shall take up the battle against thee."

He paused a moment, and then continued, as he turned towards several females who were present—"And you, young women who now hear me, though you are fair and have dove's eyes, as saith Solomon, yet trust not to these, for they will deceive you; but rather trust in His word, who sees no beauty to be compared with that holiness which is consecrated to him in the pure and spotless temple of the heart. O ye daughters of the earth! if in outward figure you be so excellent that you are said to resemble the angels of the skies, be like them also in mind, and waft your thoughts to heaven. You were created as the helpmates of man: but because this is so, let not man become a snare to thee; for God said thou shouldst be given to him for good, not he to thee for evil; and even in thy holy affections be not too much wedded to the earth, lest affection turn into sorrow, and in the day of trouble it should become to thee a tempter as it was to Rachel. If God snatch away thy little ones, even as they draw the milk of life from thy yielding bosom, grudge it not; for if God would give thy child an angel's wing to soar with seraphims, as they hang about his throne, wouldst thou sorrow for its perfection or its bliss?

"And ye old and stricken in years, take comfort," continued Hezekiah, in a solemn voice, "for your watch is nearly done; your pilgrimage draws towards its close. If your days have been passed in watchfulness, if with the wise virgins your lamps are full of oil, and trimmed, and burning bright, your comfort is a future crown; for you have fought the good fight in a world of warfare and temptation—you have suffered, but you have conquered, and soon comes your reward; for all men are born first to suffer, as naturally as the sparks fly upward."

Hezekiah paused, and looked upon the coffin as it lay in the earth. "Have comfort then, my brethren: and even as I stand at this grave, looking down on the frail dust of one who was a sinful but repenting brother, let us all join in prayer to him who made even the hard-hearted Pharaoh to relent at the voice of his servant; even so at my preaching will I pray that he would bow your stubborn wills, and make the calves of your lips to move, and pour out themselves in supplication

for his mercy; for his grace, that you so may live that your death shall be as the death of the righteous, and your grave become as the bed of Ish-bosheth, a place of rest and of peace."

Hezekiah's address produced a strong effect upon his auditory. Some listened in profound silence; others accompanied his energetic expressions with corresponding gestures of the head and the hand, raising and falling them, as heaven and the dust, alternately, became the theme of the preacher's discourse. Many seemed moved; not a few wept aloud; and not one but looked serious. No doubt, so much had the sincerity of this good minister impressed all who heard him with awe and reverence, that no one who stood near enough to the grave to listen would have done other than conduct themselves with perfect decorum, but for a circumstance which now occurred and changed the whole scene, and presented, in its place, one of outrage and impropriety, not at all uncommon at the date of our tale. These events, however, demand another chapter.

CHAPTER XXVI.

For he was of that stubborn crew,
Of errant saints, whom all men grant
To be the true church militant;
Such as do build their faith upon
The holy text of pipe and gun;
Decide all controversies by
Infallible artillery;
And prove their doctrine orthodox
By apostolic blows and knocks.

HUDIBRAS.

HEZEKIAH'S auditory had just done listening to that good man, when a hubbub, as of some sudden tumult and disorder near the oak upon the green, disturbed the concluding solemnities of the funeral. Hezekiah, who thought it some brawl incidental to drink and revelry, would not so much as turn his head to see what was the matter; but thinking he ought now just to add a parting word or two in season, he said in a loud, full, and authoritative voice—

"Brethren, go not back to yonder Sabbath-breaking, and profane fiddling, and swilling of healths, till man, who is created after God's image, makes himself to resemble a beast. Do not, I say, so far liken yourselves to Esau, who sold his birthright for a mess of pottage, as to go yonder, and to sell your own souls for a bowl of strong drink. Think what it is; and, above all, what it is in its abuse! Wine was made to gladden the heart of man, not to fever it; but as it is here used it hath twofold power, like two several elements, which in their excess are both deadly to man; for how often do we see that one will drink till his passions become fires fierce as the flames of hell. Another drowns his senses and all his being in the bowl; whilst, unsatisfied even with that, his vice, like the daughters of the horse-leech, hath a voice which still cries, Give, give, give another cup! Oh, my brethren, this is a sin on which God has passed a heavy curse by the mouths of his prophets—a curse that has been written in judgment and in blood. Howl, ye drunkards, saith Joel; woe unto drunkenness, saith Isaiah; yea a treble woe saith Habakkuk, and hell itself shall kindle hotter fires for him who, on the Lord's day, drinks not of the cup of life, but of sin to his own soul! I say, my brethren, go not among such. Shun yonder

oak; yea, shun it as the children of Israel shunned of old the groves in strong places set up for the sacrifices of Baal and Ashtaroth; or if you will go near it, let it be to do as did Gibeon, who cut down the grove and cast down the altar of Baal, which wicked idolaters had set up in mockery of the true God."

The exhortation of the preacher was not lost on his auditory: those who had attended the corpse as close mourners, bearers, or what not, as well as many of the standers-by, responded to his words with sundry groans and interjections, which shewed they were by no means indisposed to lend a helping hand to the good work of reformation. Before, however, anything could be done, the boom of a kettle-drum startled every ear, as the loud bray of the trumpet rang far and wide throughout the plain.

"What is that I hear?" said Hezekiah; "surely those are sounds that should accompany the movements of men of war? Let us pause a moment, and see what all this means; and peradventure I may tarry for the turning away of wrath, should there be fear of strife and quarrel; for surely it cannot be for peace that these come on with such warlike sounds. Listen!"

The startling sounds of the kettle-drum and the trumpet were followed by those of the trampling of horse, and soon several well-mounted troopers appeared in sight, who rode forward at a brisk trot. They were clad in buff coats, their legs thrust into the huge jack-boots of the period; steel morions, or pots, as they were very commonly called, guarded their skulls; a bright breast and back piece constituted their body armour; a belt of bandeliers and match was slung across the shoulders, and each carried, besides a carbine secured to the saddle, a sword and a brace of pistols. Their arms and armour, which shone and flashed as they caught the rays of the sun, the rapid movement of their strong and well-trained horses, the clash of their arms, their drums and formidable appearance, were altogether such a display as startled the farmers and the stout yeomen over their cups; who would, notwithstanding their English spirit, we verily believe, have run away, had it not been that their betters, and a very strong party of their followers were in the field, who encouraged them, both by word and example, not to run away at the sight of a dozen of horse troopers, and that before they knew what cause or motive had brought them to the spot.

The horsemen advanced without hindrance, for every mother's son made way for them, till, as they came near the oak tree, their officer gave the word halt, and in a moment every well-trained animal stood pawing the ground. The

officer who commanded was a Captain John Butler, of well-know fame and memory in the west of England during the civil wars; and who, if we be not greatly mistaken, has to this very hour, in an obscure churchyard of the county, a record of his virtues still in existence, inscribed on a smooth slab of fine slate (the common material used for epitaph celebrity in Devon). It runs thus:—

> In Charles his time, when civil wars were sent
> To vex the land and grieve the parliament,
> I served at Plymouth siege, etc. etc.

Shewing, in true doggerel, the many exploits of this noble captain, till that "fell sergeant, death," "so strict in his arrest," gave the word to march to a higher tribunal than that of the parliament, which Captain Butler had so long and so zealously served in this world below. Could we have obtained a correct copy of the whole of the epitaph, we would have given it for the benefit of our curious readers: but possibly some learned antiquary will favour us with finding, or with making one, that will do just as well; since it will be our task in these pages to become the biographer of Captain Butler, and to record some of those extraordinary and pious acts that rendered him so famous among godly trooping captains of horse in the times of which we write.

John Butler was a tall, raw-boned man, with a countenance in which knavery seemed to contend with a sour, puritanical expression for the mastery. His eyes were sharp, black, and envious: the mouth was peculiarly disagreeable; and when passion or fanaticism set the muscles of the whole face into action, there was a character about it which indicated a ferocious as well as a malicious spirit. Such was his personal appearance, as, armed with breast-plate and head-piece, buff and bandelier, and gloves composed of thick leather (in fashion like the ancient gauntlets), with large and heavy jack-boots, he now rode forward for the formidable purpose of putting down, by fair or foul means, the revels of Tamerton Foliot. Butler's character was well known, and had rendered him obnoxious even to many amongst his own party; as his life had been and was notoriously infamous. His uncommon success in arms, however, and his boldness as a leader, prevented any farther notice being taken of his immoralities, except that of receiving a sharp admonition, as he now and then did, from some one of the preachers of his party, who scrupled not to address him, even by name, from the pulpit; and whenever any such wished to touch on the weak points of Solomon's character, they generally illustrated their discourse by a reference to the licentious captain; since it is well known that

though, now and then, there might be a black sheep amongst the godly, yet the fanatics, generally speaking, were rigid in their moral conduct, and cruel, vindictive, and intolerant in support of their religious and political opinions. The poet, in his Hudibras, with that wit which becomes wisdom in its lessons, has admirably described their principles in two lines of his verse; for he says they would

> Compound for sins they were inclined to,
> By damning those they had no mind to.

Captain Butler, however, found out a better way than this to compound for his favourite vices; he sanctioned them, by pretending that Holy Writ gave them both authority and example. The Captain was an advocate for left-handed marriages, and thought two wives better than one; taking the second always upon trial before she became a permanent fixture. Once upon a time he fancied his wife's maid a very proper person for the left-handed helpmate, and took her accordingly. Two sons were born to him, the one by the wife and the other by the damsel: Captain Butler publicly rejoiced in the event; and comparing himself, with the presumption of a fanatic, to the godly Abraham in the Bible, he had the impudence to name the son of his spouse Isaac; and that of his hand-maiden Ishmael; thus most truly verifying the observation of the poet, that "the devil can quote Scripture for his purpose." Yet so tender was the Captain's conscience about spiritual matters at this period, that he hanged his own dog for no other crime than that of running through the detested parish church, as the nearest road to follow his master, who was crossing the churchyard.

Butler had commenced his godly career as an Independent; and was, as well as one Corporal Hannibal Gammon of his own troop, considered a powerful preacher of the word. If a harsh, deep voice, like that of an ill-played bassoon, could help to make him such, he certainly wanted no advantage of that kind. At the time we introduce him to the reader, his right-handed wife was dead, and he still lived with the left-handed one—a pious sister she was, and a convert to his opinions: it may be we shall have occasion to speak of her hereafter; for so very famous was she in her day, that it was believed she was the identical woman described by Cowley in his celebrated satire of the "preaching, or holy sister."

To return to the Captain: it was shrewdly suspected that he inclined to the Ranters, a sect, which affirmed that any act, however abominable, was guiltless, if the party who practised it esteemed it innocent in his own conscience! This suited exactly with Captain Butler's, and therefore was he justly sus-

pected by the fierce but more moral part of the Independents for inclining to the Ranters.

When the Captain rode into Tamerton, he expected to find the revellers composed of nothing but farmers and bumpkins. Now, though it was well known that these honest persons disliked the parliament army so often quartered upon them with much oppression, yet it was believed they would readily enough disperse from their revels at the very sight of a few mounted troopers. In the present instance, however, the Captain found himself mistaken; for so active had been the exertions of the royalists, in keeping up the spirits of the yeomanry at Tamerton, that an immense concourse of people stood ready to hear what the military commander might have to say, but not at all disposed to withdraw themselves from the scene.

Captain Butler paused a moment as he eyed the stout fellows who stood before him; and saw, not without surprise, that many were armed, as well as they could be, with cudgels, staves, pitchforks, birding-guns, and old swords; whilst the gentlemen present wore a much more formidable appearance; for many carried pistols in their belts, and swords in their hands. Now though possibly Captain Butler might have wished that he had not entertained quite so contemptible an opinion of the men of Tamerton, and had, therefore, brought with him a stronger body to put down the revel, yet nevertheless, being on the spot, he was not the Captain to retreat for a trifle; since he was not often daunted by numbers, nor was he wanting in courage to enforce obedience to the parliament.

He now caused the trumpet to sound; and this preface being spoken, he pronounced in a loud and distinct voice the ordinance respecting the abolition of the sports, they being declared in it, "profane, idolatrous, and superstitious." This address was received by the yeomanry with a stern silence, not at all agreeable to the Captain. He knew both himself and his party to be exceedingly unpopular in the county; and that the country people, attached to their ancient customs and sports, as well as to the athletic games that accompanied them, were not at all likely to become pleased with the soldiery, who now only appeared at the games for their prohibition.

Some sharp and angry words ensued between the Captain and a Sir William Bastard, a young Devonshire knight, who was present; and there seemed every likelihood that a general dispute would follow this sparring of the leaders, unless peace could be preserved by some means or other. For this honest purpose, Hezekiah came forward, and, to use his own words, spoke "a word in season" for the turning away of wrath. But Captain Butler, who had dismounted in order to place himself

on a little mound of earth, where he could be heard by all present, by no means approving the mild and measured terms in which Hezekiah recommended obedience as the best method to avoid breaking the Sabbath (for Sabbath-breaking was a sin with even the Captain's conscience), came up to the elbow of the temperate divine, and bidding him, very unceremoniously, "leave off his pottage," shoved him aside, and stepped into his place.

Amongst the Captain's other notable qualities was that of a fluent delivery of the wildest rant of the period; and though he held it in shame to do any work but the Lord's on the Sabbath, yet he contended that the parliament helped the Almighty himself in doing his work here on earth (in his work of chastisement it certainly did); and, therefore, whatever work came within parliamentary ordinance, he considered lawful on the seventh day; and as it allowed lay preaching, it was averred the Captain worked nothing so much as his tongue on that day of the week; for he would hold forth two hours together at a stretch, following the very just and sensible opinion, that the best things are ever those which last the longest; in fact, he judged his own discourses by this most excellent rule; few, therefore, could rival them, for few had such lungs. The present occasion he considered a fair one; the auditory were numerous, and none seemed disposed to fall asleep, or slink away from the field: what could a popular preacher desire more?

Captain Butler could not resist such a temptation; so that when he bade our worthy friend Hezekiah "leave off his pottage," he determined to give the poor hungry souls a supper of his own. After, therefore, hemming some thrice, the gifted Captain began his discourse in a cool and temperate tone, but waxed warmer and warmer at every sentence; till his eyes, features, hands and arms, were seen working together in such violent contortions, that many doubted if he were not about falling into fits in his exertions. After again and again exhorting the people to obey the parliament, and to dismiss all revelling, etc., he proceeded to touch on the wickedness of the custom in the following elegant and emphatic address:

"And what would you now be at, you sons of Belial? I see, I know, I understand you. Instead of hearkening to my words, when I am dropping precious pearls of doctrine to such swine as yourselves, you are hankering after the flesh-pots of Egypt. You would have your old Tophet back again —your Episcopalians, to speak a word to you instead of me. You would have your parsons with their tithe pigs and hens; your short-winds, your no-witted, your dumb-dog prelatists; who dress themselves up in the conjuring garments of old

popery, and prate in a steeple house, as they put a muzzle on the Holy Spirit by a poor, tasteless, saltless, witless, dry, dead-bones form of prayer. This is what you would have, you grumbling rogues, you carnal, spirit-grieving, no-trusting, morality-men; you would have all this, instead of a justifying and a saving conscience, that should keep you from the ale-pot and from revelling on a day like this."

"Brother, brother," said Hezekiah, addressing the Captain, "this will madden and not persuade them. Lambs must be led by cords of love and bonds of counsel, and not be worried and goaded to scatter them like sheep, rather than to collect them into one flock. I pray thee let me speak to them. I will handle this matter more tenderly than thou dost; and I will add my tail to thy head of the discourse; for thy matter was good, but thy manner ill. Prithee let me say a word."

The Captain, who had talked himself pretty well out of breath, gave way, as a very general hum and buzzing of voices ran through the auditory, who were in stir and motion, as if they debated the point among themselves, whether they should, or should not, at once trounce the Captain out of his stand, for he had now stationed himself very nearly under the oak; and his men, seeing the movement of the crowd, had drawn up as near as they could to their officer, either for war or for peace, or to receive the "precious pearls of his doctrine," as occasion might require.

Hezekiah opened wide his eyes, stretched out his hands, and imploring attention with a voice of supplication, at length obtained it. We really must cut short his discourse; giving only that part which was least relished by the auditors, because it was so true, that most persons felt it as if applied to themselves individually, the highest possible compliment that can be paid to a sermon. Thus then he reprehended the vices of the revel and of the period:—

"What!" he exclaimed, "is this a time, on the Sabbath-day, to meet and to dance, and to sing and to brawl, when ye should all rather rejoice and give thanks that God ended his glorious work of creation on this his holy day? But your work of iniquity does but now begin. Oh, what death is there in the pot, my brethren! but how much worse that death which lurks in the bowl! for there do ye too often thirst, and drink death to the soul! Many are the scriptural examples of the dangers and damnation of him who sits, like Haman and the king, drinking in golden cups, whilst Israel is mourning in ashes. But I will cease from my song, for it hath a dull sound on drowsy ears, though it breathes the notes of heaven. I will discourse to you in your own profane way. Will you *hear me?*"

Some cried No, others Yes; at length Hezekiah was suffered to proceed; and he now spoke those truths that came home to most present, and caused many a conscience-stricken sinner to hang down his head, in the following brief address:—

"Shun," he said with energy, "shun the cup, the fiery cup of intemperance, or it will betray more than friends or foes—it will betray thyself! wine changes all things as powerfully as alchemy, though in an opposite fashion. For whereas alchemy promises to make even base metals into pure gold, the cup of the drunkard turns what is pure into filthiness. This potent alembic makes the fool, even like Solomon's fool, talk himself into a conceit of his wisdom, the coward into boldness for mischief; whilst the night-brawler thinks he has more law than the justice, because he takes more licence to break the peace. If state be the theme, who is his fellow in counsel? If ruling, he would be a proper king! All things move before him, for he sees nothing steady; and his very vision is false, for that becomes doubled; whilst his tongue holds no count, but multiplies words beyond measure, and he loses all but his honesty, for that he hath not to keep. Your wine-bibber, though he eat little, hath nevertheless a boundless stomach; for gold, land, and jewels, all go down into it with his cups. You may note in him three things something opposite to nature, yet habit makes them falsely natural to him. First, he drinks to breed thirst, not to satisfy it; secondly, his aim is not to fill his cup with wine, but his brain with fire; and, lastly, though idleness be his least offence, nevertheless his desire is, not to kill his time only, but his hopes of eternity! whilst till such soul-and-body killing be complete, he will dash down the very sand-glass and trample on it with his foot, because, forsooth, the hours were not made for a reveller!"

Here Hezekiah was interrupted in the very heat of his discourse; for, whilst he had been preaching under the oak, Corporal Hannibal Gammon, who, like Captain Butler, held Hezekiah's temperate lecture as very "poor pottage," had begun to hold forth, seated as he was upon his horse, and in a manner much better suited to his own taste than to that of his auditors; as he poured out, with the vehemence and gestures of a bedlamite, sedition, heresy, and schism, all in a breath; pressing into the service of his discourse as many texts from Scripture as he could possibly remember at random, just as they came uppermost, till at length he grew so very personal, violent, and offensive, that those who were before disposed to be at peace seemed now inclined to take upon themselves the task of driving out the small party of troopers from the field.

Sir William Bastard, a young royalist, whose high and enterprising spirit rendered him celebrated in Devon, busied himself in collecting around him his partisans and followers. The crowd was now thickening on all sides; and whilst low murmurs, or open expressions of discontent, broke forth partially in various directions, the body of persons collected began to shew that sort of movement which indicates anything but a settled and calm temper, in listening to an harangue: it might, in fact, be compared to the ground-swell of the sea, which shews a strong internal cause of agitation, though no tempest may be actually raging without.

Corporal Hannibal Gammon, however, was too much of a Hannibal in his disposition, especially when supported by his own eloquence, to be daunted by these appearances of dissatisfaction; and with as high a resolution, and a much higher degree of bitterness and malice, than did ever Hannibal express when he vowed the destruction of Rome, did he continue to pour out the vials of wrath, and vengeance, against the king, the church, the royalists, and all schismatics, except those of his own sect. The Corporal was now in the very storm of his eloquence, as he thundered out his anathemas, in a style Doctor Gray would have rejoiced to have set down at large, as an appendix to his notes on the "pulpit drum ecclesiastic" of Hudibras.

"I say," continued the Corporal, "arise, my brethren, and be doing; and don't be doing by halves; make root and branch work with it. I say, out with the old man altogether, and set up the new man in your hearts. My words to the carnal may seem thorny and grievous, but they shall be soul-saving and savoury in the great day of wrath. Up, then, and be doing; for remember the words of Jeremy the prophet—Cursed be he that keepeth back his sword from blood. Tell it aloud in Gath; proclaim it from the house-top. Will you draw the sword? Will you put away Saul? Spare not in the city, spare not in the field. Down with this idolatry, down with these altars of Baal," continued the infuriated Corporal, as he rode forward, and dashed down with the halbert he held in his hand one of the tables of gingerbread belonging to an old woman who trafficked in that line at the revel. The populace murmured; and the old woman called out she was ruined, as the boys scrambled to enrich themselves on the wreck of her fortunes, as eagerly as did ever the Cornish boors on one of the luckless "God-sends," or wrecks, that fell to pieces on their coast.

But the Corporal viewed this mighty wreck of his own hand perfectly unmoved. He now shifted his subject; for not

Pindar himself took greater flights in his Odes than did this worthy corporal in the sudden transitions of his discourses. "I say," he continued, "ye shall no longer serve Pharaoh, whose heart is hardened against this people. But ye shall turn against him, and ye shall turn your ploughshares into swords, to fight the battle of the Lord. Now is the time; up and be doing; execute judgment; for what trooper's hand, or what no trooper's, any-man's hand, would not raise up the sword to war on Babylon, to put down the old iniquity? Take all, then; take the king of Ai, and let him be hanged on high, as high as wicked Haman at the word of Mordecai the Jew; and spare none that would spare him: but take their old men, and their young men, and their women, and their little ones, and the strangers conversant among them, and hang 'em all up, all, all that will not obey the general, and the captains, and the cornets, and the corporals, and the parliament, and—"

"And the devil, when he preaches in a corporal's buff coat," said a bold yeoman who stood near, and whose sally was accompanied by a loud laugh from many of the by-standers. This greatly incensed the military orator, who cried out in wrath, "Thou poor, pitiful, base fellow, thou sty of uncleanness, thou; but that thou art beneath my notice, I would strive with thee, even with the arm of flesh at the waters of Meribah. But thou art beneath me."

"I know I am," replied the stout yeoman; "whilst you sit there perched upon a high horse, on the top of a demi-pique saddle. But come down, you psalm-singing knave; lay aside that long tuck that hangs by your side; make a ring, and let us have fair play, and I will shew you what an honest fist can do in spite of your leather hide."

"Hold thy peace, man," said Captain Butler, who now spoke. "We have not time to waste on such as thou art: we have a few more crumbs of comfort to give the people, and then we will settle matters with thee."

"I say," continued the Captain, "that this is the eleventh hour, and we must not delay our Master's work. If ye will not disperse in peace, we must do by you as Jehu did by Jehoram—we must draw our swords and bend our bows; and not an arrow shall fly, nor a halbert, nor a pike, nor a petronel, nor a tuck, be sent out against you, but it shall find a joint in the armour of an Ahab for the slaying of the slayer. And shall we not put down these your hellish altars of Baal? For what are they, but a heap of unsavoury, Romish rubbish, ready to be cast out and consumed before your eyes? Corporal Hannibal Gammon draw together the men, for these foolish people shall see how vain is their trust before their very eyes.

At this moment a voice amongst the crowd cried out aloud, "Here comes Captain Doll, with more of the Roundhead rascals behind. Stand close, good people, don't give ground. Knock down Captain Doll, or anybody who would advance upon us."

The Captain Doll here mentioned was a character so very extraordinary in the west, at the time of our narrative, that whilst we leave the mob, military and otherwise, to break each others' heads in the contest, we must say a word or two about a personage so remarkable to the reader. This, very generally known by the name of Captain Doll, was no other than the famous, or rather infamous, Dorothy Summerfield, the left-handed wife of Captain Butler—a character quite as noted in her day, and with about as much virtue, as the preaching Mistress Venn, of whom Cowley says,

> Nay, all your preachers, women, boys, and men,
> From Master Calamy to Mistress Venn,
> Are perfect popes, in their own parish, grown;
> For to outdo the story of Pope Joan,
> Your women preach too, and are like to be
> Harlots of Babylon as much as she.

Dolly Summerfield had been orginally the servant, and was now the disciple, of the pious Captain Butler, leaving all things to follow him, as his left-handed wife, at the suggestion, as she declared, of that spirit of grace which was in all he said, did, or thought. Dolly's fidelity in attending him through town and camp, in the preaching or in the field, acquired for her a fame so great, that, together with her own gifts, even poets and wits considered her a subject not unworthy celebrating in doggerel couplets and songs, fit for Billingsgate wenches and Turnbull-street ruffians, to sing at their orgies of Bacchus and infamy. Dolly could, as Cowley says, "sit out three sermons in a day," and ever vowed "the longest was the best." And of all grace-saving preachers none could, in her mind, compete with Captain Butler; for he, good soul, had such comfortable doctrines at the "pourings out" for his own people.

And then the Captain had such a charitable latitude in his opinions; and she imitated and admired them all; for as he held "all things to the pure were pure," where could be the sin of a left-handed wife, in the person of a sister in the spirit, so godly as herself? And then Dolly's demeanour at those "long sermons" was so edifying, so devout; for she would sit twirling her thumbs, with half-shut eyes, and with a little pocket Bible on her knees, that opened of itself at the story of Abraham and Hagar, the handmaiden of Rebecca. And then she was a great singer of psalms, when listeners were

nigh, who loved to hear and report such exercises and strains. Her conscience, too, was exceedingly nice; no slumberer was it in her bosom, but was ever alive to detect sin in all its shapes and its bearings; she never, therefore, forgot to note and "register the sins of her neighbours."

And as to the godly, Dolly could tell them in a moment, for she truly "judged men's hearts according to their hair." Her greatest gift lay in preaching; and as she held herself bound to pour out the suggestions of the Spirit, without muzzling attentions to forms of time and place, she thought it no disparagement to be called forth to speak a word or so for mutual fructifying and edification, with a poor sister or brother, even by night as well as by day.

Now it so chanced that in one of these nocturnal "seekings" (as they were called by the Ranters), she was rather suddenly disturbed by the sound of "boot and saddle," given by the trumpet to prepare the camp, wherein she was, for sudden defence. In her alarm, and whilst making a hasty retreat, she made a small mistake, and came forth from her orisons with Captain Butler's buff coat thrown across her shoulders, and his steel cap upon her head, to ward off the rain and the night air. The circumstance was a slight mischance, but gave rise to scandal, and ever after she was known by no other name than that of 'Captain Doll,' given in allusion to her military habiliments.

In her person she was tall, high-shouldered, and strapping; and though she was never seen to blush on any extraordinary occasion, yet modesty was so natural to her, that it had furnished her cheeks and even her nose with a lasting red that nothing could wear out; though many wicked and envious persons scrupled not to say, that she was indebted for this ornament to the glowing hues of strong drink and old sack, to which she had recourse as helps to the spirit.

Dolly was attired partly like a woman, and partly like a trooper; for holding that no church was so true as the church military, she had not followed its banners merely as an idle honour, without sharing in its action: on the contrary, on all occasions she prepared to take an active and strenuous part in support of its cause. She wore, therefore, an old buff jerkin over her stomacher and petticoats, and was armed with a rusty pike as well as a pistol, cocked, and stuck by her side in a girdle of leather. These arms, it was said, she found it absolutely necessary to assume, since she had rendered herself somewhat obnoxious, by having once on a time acted as the assistant of the famous Hopkins, so celebrated in his cruel and infamous vocation of witch-finder general to the parliament of

London. It was whispered, that even now she dabbled in the same trade, though in a more covert and artful manner, as we may probably hereafter have occasion to mention.

This very curious and very distinguished Captain Doll now came into the field to back Captain Butler in his exploits; and she did so with as much fierceness and determination as did ever Grim Bloody-man display when he came to back the lions at the hill Difficulty, set forth in the Pilgrim's Progress by that truly bright genius, and king of all tinkers, honest John Bunyan; whose book takes hold of the fancy and the heart, and keeps possession thereof from infancy to age.

To return from this digression (but who could pass John Bunyan without a word of praise?) Captain Doll now laid about her with many a hearty cuff; and chiefly confining her contests to her own sex, many a cap was torn, and many locks of hair shared the same fate, and many a bloody nose was given in this never-sufficiently-to-be-celebrated battle of Tamerton Foliot, that took place in the churchyard; and we hope our good neighbours and Devonshire readers will make a pilgrimage to visit the spot, as a compliment to the courage there displayed, and the honours there won on this memorable day. Whilst Captain Doll's hands were thus employed in clawing and cuffing, her tongue, that fiery sword, was not idle, for she swore (the godly even could swear when in a passion), raved, ranted, railed, abused, preached, and sung psalms, all in a breath. Running over the grievances that had been made the standing complaint of the parliament rebels and the fanatical religionists of her day (they never thought of reforming themselves), and all this she uttered with a surprising volubility, till, at length, so dexterous was she in the management of all her weapons, that she contrived, even whilst now and then giving and taking an admonitory cuff, to work up her complaints into something like a regular discourse, and to play it off, with sundry vituperations, like a running fire of musketry in a skirmish or retreat.

At last she declared that unless every one present would, like herself, "up and be doing," and assist Captain Butler in his pious work, the land would be given over to fury and to wrath, and not so much as a single spark of the spirit of grace would be left in it, to save the whole people from a night worse than that of the curse of Egypt's darkness. After this ranting, fanatical harangue, she started up, snatched up a large stone, and bade all follow her to cast "the first stone" at the adulterous idolatry of the painted windows in the church; saying the Lord of heaven and earth would run away from the land of England if they did not; and con*cluded* with these raving words:—

"He's going, I say, my brethren, he's going, his glory is departing. England hath seen her best days, and now evil days are befalling us. The Lord is packing up the covenant —the Scotch and English covenant—because nobody will buy his wares, nor come up to his price. Oh, lay hands upon him! Let him not go out of your coasts. He's going, he's snatching up your Bibles, and taking them away too, because they are so covered with dust, for lack of use, that you may, with your own fingers, draw maps of hell upon their covers; ay, write there, too, your own names. I say, follow me, and down with idolatery to stay him; for he's going, he's going—stop him, stop him; I'll do something to stop him, I'll be first at the work."

So saying, off she went, and many followed this mad, fanatical woman. She rushed forward, and with one hurl of the ponderous stone in her hand smashed in a whole row of Gothic saints that had, very harmlessly, for centuries stood quietly decorating the great east window of Tamerton church. Groan, ye antiquaries, then unborn, for it is true; and the plain glass windows now seen in that venerable fabric shall still bear witness of the same, for they owe the elevation of their less costly lights* to the havoc of that day. Captain Doll's example was followed by the troopers, and all the fanatical roundheads who were present (whilst the royalists in vain struggled to stop their fury), and they joined in the same unhallowed work.

The confusion now became terrible; horses pranced, men were knocked down, pistols were fired, swords drawn, women screamed, cudgels and even pitchforks were flourished. Some got torn from their horses, others were rolled in the dust, many were wounded, and several were killed. The windows of the church were broken to pieces. The blind fiddler lost his fiddle, and all but his dog, that never deserted him. The Jew frippery merchant was made prisoner for the sake of his wares; and the fool ran away like a wise man, when he found he could no longer keep his ground. The gentlemen Cavaliers fought as boldly as the Roundheads, and as resolutely contended for the support of the revels as if the fate of the king had depended on their continuance, by giving good blows to his enemies this day. Long and fierce did the contest rage, till, we believe, we must say that victory not being clearly decided either for the one party or the other, the troopers and their preaching captain, with his valiant Captain Doll, satisfied at length with the mischief they had accomplished on the church and the stone cross, and the fripperies and follies and

* Church windows were formerly called "church lights."

broken heads of the revel, prepared to sound a retreat for very weariness, taking with them a few prisoners, though none of any great consequence; and so they left the field, as Doll set up her voice and chanted a psalm of victory, like that of Deborah rejoicing over the defeat of Barach and his idol Baal.

Her singing, however, soon met with a stop; for being imprudent enough to linger behind the troopers, in order to take a cup of strong waters at the Oak, to recruit her spirits after the toils of the day, she was hunted, on coming out, by a parcel of ragamuffins and boys, and attempted to take shelter in the cottage of Mistress Raleigh. The widow had previously returned from her visit to the church, and had her own most especial reasons for dreading the prying curiosity of such a person at such a time. She refused, therefore, to let her in, and Doll vowed a bitter oath of vengeance against Widow Raleigh—a vow which one of her character was not likely to forget. The boys, however, lost not the present opportunity, and instantly took their revenge for the spoiling of their sports. Assisted by some wild young fellows of the parish, they now mounted Doll on the back of an old horse, with her face towards the tail, in order to make her ride to water, as it was called in Devonshire—a custom the same as riding the skimmington, the notorious punishment for a scold. Whilst they were leading her down to the next horse pond to receive a ducking, they had to cross a small narrow bridge above the pretty stream that runs through the village. At this spot Captain Doll renewed her efforts to get free with so much violence, that she lost her balance, and tumbled head over heels into the stream beneath, thus very effectually giving herself as good a ducking as could be desired on the occasion. The boys hissed and pelted, the boors clapped their hands and roared out peals of laughter, and, in memory of the event, the little bridge, where it happened, to this day retains the name of Tumbler's Folly in Tamerton town. Well soused and drenched, she was at last carried off by the godly tailor and cobbler, in a state more dead than alive; and so ended her adventures for the time.

Hezekiah (except the few broken heads given to the troopers) certainly came off the worst of the parliamentary party; for he had endeavoured to make peace between the infuriated combatants on each side; and, like most moderate men (who take upon themselves, uncalled for, such a dangerous pacific office, to curb the wildness of passion when roused in a religious or political cause), his ministry ended in war being declared against himself on both sides the question; the puritans visiting him with all the indignation due to a lukewarm middle-

man; and very heartily did they bestow upon him the names of a nullifegian, a no-heart, a Laodicean, etc. etc., with many a good cuff to give force to each emphatic appellative. The Cavaliers, on the other hand, greeted him as a hypocrite, a psalm-singing knave, a rebel, and pushed him about, as a fellow in a black coat, who had helped, by his desertion of the church, to pull down the bishops and the regular clergy.

The troopers gone, the gentlemen and royalists now collected their followers together, in order to make a hasty retreat; having first caused the lame, the maimed, and the wounded, to be cared for with all diligence. They next consulted briefly on matters "deep and dangerous," fixed a time and place of rendezvous, as, after the events of this day, they all felt the hour for more strenuous exertions and for more open acts of hostility must be at hand. For the present we leave them, and turn to other matter, of no less importance in this most faithful and veritable history.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Him he knew well, and guess'd that it was she;
But being mask'd he was not sure.
SHAKSPEARE.

DURING the scene of uproar and confusion we have just described, there appeared amongst those who took an active part in abetting the royalists no less a person than young Elford. Certainly he had with much imprudence ventured to join a fray in which nothing decisive for the benefit of his own party could take place, and where he exposed himself to great danger without an adequate cause for the risk. This was the heedless action of a young man, and as such could alone be excused.

Be this as it may, it is certain he was recognised by the valiant Captain Coleman, who had taken no part whatever in the fray; but seemed on the look out to observe such as distinguished themselves on either side of the question. The reader will recollect the very doubtful character of the Captain; that he had threatened Elford (when by his interference Mistress Raleigh's purse had been saved from plunder), and for this and some other reasons Coleman entertained towards him a petty but malignant spite. In fact, the Captain was bent on doing him a mischief: but in order to effect it, with profit to himself, he knew it to be necessary Reginald should be apprehended by the civil officers, solely on his information; for if the troopers became a party in the affair, though Elford would assuredly be secured, it would in that case be very doubtful if the reward for betraying him did not fall to them, instead of to himself.

On this account, therefore, Coleman said not one word to Captain Butler about Elford's being present at the revel, though he knew him well enough, notwithstanding the slouched hat and the large cloak in which he had endeavoured to disguise his person. Coleman was, heart and soul, a coward: he dared not personally engage with Elford. He concluded the sure mode, however, to deal with him would be to trace him to his lurking-place; and for that purpose, when the young royalist mounted his horse, which had been tied up behind the little garden of Mistress Raleigh's cottage, Coleman did the same, and very leisurely rode after him.

The presence of Elford had also been observed by the lady in the mask, who was at Mistress Raleigh's during the battle; she saw him mount and depart, after the action subsided; she likewise observed that the Captain was preparing to follow his steps. Without a moment's delay, she hastily called a serving boy who attended her, whispered something in his ear, and the lad, instantly obeying her commands, brought her horse with his own to the door: she mounted, and leaving the cottage by another path, contrived to get the start of Elford, so as to be riding on before him towards a certain cross road that she knew he must pass, by the direction he took on quitting the ground.

Young Elford's spirits were much depressed; for having but that very morning chanced to meet Dame Gee, the artful woman (who for her own purposes contrived to keep a sort of intelligence with all parties) had given him certain hints respecting the extraordinary interview which she had witnessed, when watching the dead, between Amias Radcliffe and Mistress Agnes Piper, on the terrace at Mount Edgcumbe. Reginald, who had the most devoted opinion of the truth and fidelity of his dear Agnes, would not suffer himself to suspect her. He knew the times were extraordinary, and gave birth to extraordinary circumstances; he hoped, therefore, this was capable of a satisfactory explanation: still, in spite of himself, it roused in his breast the latent sparks of doubt and jealousy; feelings that true love, perhaps, can never be wholly freed from, till the beloved object is its own. So that, though he would not willingly doubt Agnes, he, nevertheless, could not rest till he had seen her, to obtain an explanation of what had occurred. At no small risk, he had early that morning ventured on the gronnds of Mount Edgcumbe, parading its walks and plantations in the hope to meet Agnes in her rambles. He did not see her; but meeting one of the little dog boys (for so were they called who turned the spits), he learned that she had accompanied her friend Robina to a small hunting seat of Sir Piers Edgcumbe, situated in the parish of Tamerton Foliot: the boy had heard the ladies were gone there to be near the revels, which they had some thoughts of seeing. Many Devonshire ladies were in the habit of witnessing such festivals, if they were not held from them by being puritans. This circumstance will account for Reginald's imprudence in venturing to the revel himself, for the uneasiness of his mind outweighed the danger; and not daring to go direct to the hunting-seat, he thought he should meet Agnes either on Tamerton Green or in her way home.

Not finding her, however, he determined to ride forward

towards the house, and by some means or other to gain an interview, to have his mind set at rest on points of so much moment. Full of perturbed thoughts and anxious feelings he rode on; when all at once, his heart took the alarm, and beat quick, by observing the masked lady riding before him in the same direction with himself. Was it, could it be Agnes? The height was hers, the air was the same, and the same was the graceful and easy manage of her horse. He did not recognise the animal as being hers: but that was nothing; for Sir Piers had many horses, and Mistress Agnes Piper, accomplished in the art, could ride out hawking on any high-spirited animal that came in the way, as well as any lady in the county. And then the dark mantle on her shoulders—he thought he knew it: he was sure he had seen Agnes ride many a day in such a mantle? He would ride forward, and demand an explanation; notwithstanding Captain Coleman, who was close following on the same road (but without having shewn the least signs of recognising Elford), had now rather ridden forward, and was nearer to the lady than himself.

Still he felt some caution to be necessary: for though he was almost certain the masked figure was Agnes, yet it was possible he might be mistaken. The voice, he thought, if she spoke, would decide the question. His resolution taken, in a few minutes he was by her side, having brushed passed Captain Coleman to ride up to her. Her little attendant rode on before, as the boy had advanced to open a gate that led down a narrow lane. Elford bowed, and saluted the lady in courteous terms; and though she as politely returned his salutation, by an inclination of the head, she did not answer him one word.

"Strange!" thought Elford; "what can this mean? am I played with, or am I deceived? Yet I will not judge rashly: there may be a cause for this extraordinary conduct. I will keep my temper, and prove her, before I communicate a word of what passed at Mount Edgcumbe being known to me. She shall not see I suspect her."

These and similar thoughts passed rapidly through his mind, as he again addressed the lady with the spirit and courtesy peculiar to the manners of the age in which he lived: yet he received no answer.

Determined, however, to persevere, he thus continued—"I trust, madam, you will vouchsafe your true servant a word" (at the date of our tale lovers generally styled themselves servant when they spoke to their beloved). "You may declare yourself to me openly; for though I perceive you are bent on trying my patience this morning, yet I know who you are, since neither mask nor mantle can hide you from my eyes."

"Indeed, sir," replied the lady, in a voice which, to Reginald's ear, sounded certainly very like the voice of Agnes, though she spoke in rather a higher key than was usual with her, "if I am so well known, as you say I am, there needs not I should declare myself. Yet, though I know you to be a good marksman, you may, nevertheless, sometimes shoot wide the mark, as you now do, may be."

"I think not that I do, lady," said Reginald; "a beautiful woman is not easily hidden. But come, let us leave this idle play of words; one kind, frank expression is worth a thousand even just compliments. Let me but be assured you are the lady I take you to be, and——"

"Indeed," said the lady in the mask, laughing, for she seemed bent on badinage, "I will not allow your compliment to be just; nor will I believe that you think me fair, for you have not seen my face: though, had you done so, perhaps you would pronounce it indifferent well, not the worst as times go, when so many spoil their beauty with weeping for the wars."

"The wars are bad enough in themselves," said Reginald, "but they would be a curse, indeed, if they destroyed beauty. There is but one thing which excels it, the beauty of the mind, where sincerity shines as a perpetual light: to play with the feelings of another, as you seem disposed to play with mine this morning, can make no part of such a grace. Leave, then, I beseech you, these follies, which I fear you have learnt from your friend, and act and speak like yourself; for I have something of most painful import to communicate. You know I love you, and I would now tell you——"

"Hush, hush, no secret," cried the masked lady, "else may you repent when you find your error. And take my advice, never profess love till you are certain your professions would be welcome. How know you," she added, again laughing, "but that I may prefer some rival to yourself?"

Reginald started at these words, although they were playfully spoken; and firing with jealousy he exclaimed, "Never, never! you could not, after what has passed, thus treat me. Your sincerity, your truth, the delicacy of your feelings, your own conscience, all would forbid it! There can be, there ought to be, no jealousy in my heart towards you, when I know in yours, though you now torment me, that you are true—all that is true in soul and excellent in mind."

"O yes!" said the masked lady, "this is the way with you all—you flatter us, make us vain, and then will presently abuse us for our follies. We are angels—so long as we are wooed, and do not offend you; but we are little better than spirits of evil on the first slight cause of suspicion. You will call our

faces fair, and tell us new blown roses are not so fresh, whilst you are held in doubt of our affections: but if you once win us, and we do but jest with you, then are you lords of creation, indeed, in your anger. I know your false sex well, and will trust none of you; for when you profess, I am incredulous as a Jew, and as hard-hearted as a committee-man, when a royalist cries, 'Have mercy on my goods and purse.'"

"That cannot be," said Reginald; "but I must not be angry with you. I see you are determined, for very sport, this day, to play with my feelings; and truly, though I think such a spirit ill-timed, yet you try my temper with so much pleasantry, I cannot but admire you, for your very faults are graces."

"And you would quickly consider my graces, as you call them, my faults," said she; "for when but now I was silent—which most men hold to be a virtue in woman—you deemed me sullen; and now when I talk to you, you are not satisfied, but think it idle babble! There is nothing I could do or say, but you would find out a cause for it, and that not the most gracious. I know you, and all of you—you flatter us whilst you woo us, grow cold to us when you win us, and become tyrants when you wed us; and then for jealousy ——"

"Nay, this is carrying jesting too far," said Reginald: "I beseech you to be serious; I came to speak with you on things of moment, and not to trifle thus. I know not what to think of your manner towards me; for in the midst of this playful mood there is something of severity in your speech, or as if you had practised this play of words like the idlers of a court, who study to speak with point."

"My words are the more fit for court then," said the masked lady, "like a new shaped beard."*

"You would be a wit, lady," said Reginald.

"I hope not, sir," she replied; "else would there be danger I might become a fool, if the old times return, and the old fashion of motley comes in again with them."

"I cannot speak a sentence," exclaimed Elford in a petulant manner, "but you take me up, and play upon me."

"Better that you suffer me to do so than others to play against you," said the lady. "Can you fence, sir?"

"With a man on a just cause of quarrel I might do so," replied Elford.

"Think you not, then," continued the masked lady, "that a fencer's skill may be ever known by his play? and that those are reckoned most skilful who can parry an attack, be it made direct, indirect, in advance, under a feint, or by any cunning

* Pointed beards were worn at court at the date of our tale.

practice of foil, eye, or hand? Now, sir," she added, looking round, "I am that skilful fencer; and all this time have I been parrying an attack aimed at you."

"I do not understand you, madam," said Elford.

"May be not, sir," she continued in a hurried voice, and now drew her horse quite close up to his: "I will explain it to you. I must be brief: you are in danger—you are beset. My presence has hitherto been your protection. You were watched from the revels, waylaid. That villain Coleman dogged your steps. Not ten minutes since, as we passed yonder field, I saw certain officers of the law, who are leagued with that fellow; but for my presence he would have given the alarm to them. I talked, laughed, led you on to let him see you journeyed in my company, and as my friend, for whom I feared nothing. They dared not touch you whilst by my side; for though I wear a mask they know me well enough, by the serving varlet who follows me. Here lies the open road. Ride on for your life. I will turn back and retrace my footsteps; and if I meet them, I will delay their purpose in the name of one they dare not disobey. Be wary, you know not your danger: do not venture thus into public; it was an act of madness your thus coming to the revels. Tell your father he must quit the hut for ever: he must not return to it. I know he left it last night for another place of concealment that was almost as hazardous. Ride forward; be more careful in future. Now you have nothing to fear; but remember you cannot always have me at hand to save you; and there are those from whom I could not save you."

"You are not then the lady for whom I took you?" said Elford: "yet the height, the air, nay, the very voice, is similar; though your voice, now I hear it in these hurried moments, is more deep, more energetic, more commanding. Tell me who you are: trust to my honour, and let me know my protectress; for such I doubt not you have been to me this day."

"Know nothing, but that I am your friend," she replied; "once again, I warn you of danger. Beware of that hawk-eyed Captain Coleman. I know him to be concerned with men dangerous to you. Fly this country, and you are safe. Farewell, may heaven guard you."

So saying, the masked lady struck her horse smartly with her riding rod, and turned back into the very road where Captain Coleman had lurked behind after so long following Elford; and the spirited animal, setting off at full gallop, soon bore her out of sight. Her serving boy attended her at a pace as rapid as her own.

Elford's feelings were confused and agitated on parting from her; and though he rode on as she bade him, he could not resist the desire he felt to see Agnes before he returned to his lurking-place at Sir William Bastard's, for it was at the house of that gallant royalist he had now found shelter. There he still hoped to remain till all things should be in readiness for executing the long meditated plan respecting the liberation of the King, and the calling up all true hearts in the west to join his cause.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

His words are bonds, his oaths are oracles;
His love sincere, his thoughts immaculate;
His tears pure messengers sent from his heart;
His heart as far from fraud as heaven from earth.
This jealousy is for a precious creature: as she's rare,
Must it be great; and, as his person's noble,
Must it be violent.

SHAKSPERE.

We must now for awhile leave Reginald Elford on his road, whilst we advert to other circumstances destined to fall out on the very day of Tamerton revel. Our readers will recollect that Gertrude Copplestone had made Amias Radcliffe promise to become the bearer of a letter that was to be delivered, with secrecy, into the hands of Agnes; so as to insure its certain but mysterious conveyance to her father Sir Hugh Piper. Radcliffe (having previously learnt that the family of Mount Edgcumbe, with their guests and friends, had removed for a few days to the hunting-seat near Tamerton), set out to fulfil Gertrude's errand; intending to obtain an interview with Mistress Agnes, by means of a female servant, whose ministry the many lovers of Agnes had before now propitiated, for the conveyance of letters, sonnets, posies, and valentines, frequently sent anonymously to this beautiful "cynosure of neighbouring eyes," according to the adulatory style of making love then so much in fashion.

Radcliffe had set out to do his errand in bad spirits; and having secured the good offices of the waiting damsel, Mistress Agnes consented, through her, to see Amias for a short time, if he called at a certain hour named for the interview. Now it so happened that as Radcliffe was gliding up to the house with considerable caution, Reginald Elford (who was already arrived, and had tied up his horse to one of the trees) espied him, as the waiting-maid opened a small back door, and let him in, evidently with anxiety to conceal his visit, for she looked out, and cautiously peeped around her, with that watchfulness of manner persons are apt to display when doing what they fear should be observed by others. At present we say nothing more of Elford's feelings, except it be to remark, that, stung by jealousy, he became almost frantic at what he

saw; supported as were his suspicions by the previous information of Dame Gee. Elford rashly pronounced Agnes false in heart, and determined to take a full revenge for his injuries: he concealed himself therefore, in order to watch Radcliffe's retreat from the house, after the interview should have taken place between that happy rival (for so he considered Amias) and his own beloved but treacherous mistress. We follow the steps of Radcliffe.

He was ushered into a small parlour in a retired part of the house, where he had not waited long, though in much perturbation and anxiety, when Agnes herself appeared. She, too, looked agitated, and asked, in a voice full of emotion, "Wherefore, after the interview she had granted to Master Radcliffe at Mount Edgcumbe, at a time and in a manner so full of peril to herself, he should again seek her?"

"For a double purpose, madam," said Radcliffe: "have you so soon forgot what passed at that interview? or do you think that these adverse times can so far change my feelings with my fortunes, that I would desert you because I am myself unfortunate? No, Agnes, mine is not a summer friendship. You have forbid me, for ever forbid me, to call my devotion to you by a tenderer name. But though I can have no hope to win your affection, I will so act as to command your esteem. You shall feel I can be generous; and that in doing what I can to render you happy, I am careless of myself."

"Alas!" said Agnes, in a kind and conciliatory manner; "I have dealt frankly with you, Master Amias, I have never deceived you. All I could give—unequal, I grant, to your merit, or to the debt of gratitude I must ever owe you—is yours. You saved me from a watery grave; you offered me your affections; but I had none to give in return; mine were already bestowed upon another. The service you did me, the noble nature of your mind, the warmth of your feelings, all demanded that towards you I should act with unreserved sincerity. You know I did so, and that to your honour I confided all the truth; whilst, in compliance with your own earnest solicitations, I gave you a promise, which I have most sacredly fulfilled, that I would reveal to no one the suit you made to me, as it was unsuccessful. There scarcely needed such a promise, since delicacy towards your wounded feelings would have for ever sealed my lips."

Radcliffe seemed much affected by the feeling manner in which she addressed him; she thus concluded: "Have I not ever proved myself grateful? Have I not granted all to your affection that I could grant with truth to you and honour to another? To give you full satisfaction, I acceded to your

wish, I met you on the terrace at Mount Edgcumbe. Think how great was the risk I encountered in granting that interview! How liable it was to misconstruction had it been known!"

"I sought that interview," said Radcliffe, "from no wrong motive. A vague report had reached me, whilst I was abroad, that Reginald Elford, to whom you had acknowledged yourself plighted, had lost his life in the battle of Newbury. I knew that the royalists were defeated throughout the kingdom, and that my own party had prevailed. Not knowing into what circumstances of distress these changes might have plunged your father, and yourself, I hastened to England. Perhaps, too, I might have indulged the hope—for I will not conceal the truth from you—that the death of Reginald Elford leaving your hand free, time would soften your regrets, whilst my long and devoted affection, with your own esteem for me, might act upon your feelings, and—but I will not speak of the past—I came to England. You granted me the interview I so earnestly desired; and from your lips I learnt that Elford, my sworn foe, my happy rival, lived, and still lived happy though beggared and in hourly danger, since you remained the same to him in faith and in affection."

"And could you, Master Amias, have esteemed me worthy a thought had I been other?—Could I have deserted him, and have deserved the esteem of any good man's heart? I am sure you commend me in yours; for yours is most generous. I shall never forget that night upon the terrace, when I confessed to you how unhappy I was on his account, fearing he might be betrayed, you so nobly vowed, for my sake, that though Elford had been your enemy you would watch over his safety, and do your utmost to shield him from danger. It was a generous, a noble act—worthy Amias Radcliffe."

"And I am here to fulfil my promise," said Radcliffe. "Reginald Elford is in danger; I have learnt it from one—though I am not at liberty to say from whom—whose soul is the soul of honour; whose words are truth, and in whom the most entire trust may be placed. Reginald must walk warily, or he will be taken and betrayed as well as his father. Here, too, Agnes, is a letter addressed to your own father. I know not the contents; yet they may be trusted, as they come from the same worthy hand. Take the letter; and as you value Sir Hugh Piper's life, so was I solemnly charged to tell you, say not by whose means it came hither, but place it in your father's chamber, with his other letters, as they may arrive, so that he will be certain to find this among them. I have fulfilled my charge; and now, Agnes, I have but to ask you

sometimes to think of me with kindness, with pity; and remember, though you will find not one only, but many who love you, that Amias Radcliffe was, perhaps, alone the friend, who, in the midst of his sorrows, his disappointment, endeavoured to forget his own misery in the hope to render you happy. Farewell: may heaven watch over and bless you!"

So saying he pressed her hand fervently to his lips; his tears dropped on it; and casting upon her a look in which all the sorrow and affection of his soul seemed concentrated, he rushed from the room, fearful longer to trust his resolution in her presence, and hastily quitted the house.

In the mean time Reginald Elford, who (already strongly prejudiced against Radcliffe in politics, in war, and in love) had so grievously misconstrued the object of this visit, was now awaiting the unfortunate youth's return, with all the bitterness of spirit inspired by doubt, anger, and jealousy. He had resolved, the moment Radcliffe appeared, to insist upon what he deemed an honourable settlement of his own wrongs. He saw Amias leave the house, and suffered him to advance, till he turned into a sequestered walk that led through a thick plantation. Reginald rushed forward, turned to confront his rival, and in an instant unsheathing his sword, exclaimed with fury in his looks and expressions, "Draw, sir, draw! you shall not pass on. I will have satisfaction; draw and defend yourself; for as there is honour in man, or truth in heaven, you or I must fall on this spot."

Radcliffe's astonishment may be readily conceived: it was true Elford and himself had been before now opposed to each other, but then it was in a public quarrel brought on by the civil wars of the period, when not only friends, but sometimes even relatives, met in battle or in fatal affrays. He had no private cause of quarrel with Elford that he knew of, as Agnes had never received his addresses. He did not, therefore, at the moment, suppose jealousy could be the motive for conduct as rash as it was unwarranted; and fearing some strange misconception he mildly said, "I am no stranger to you, Reginald Elford; nor to the bitterness of resentment with which you have pursued me, ever since the storming of Ford House, when I chose to espouse the cause of the parliament, as you did that of the king; but I am not conscious of having done you any private wrong, nor any public one either, that should render it necessary I am to spill your blood, and risk my own life, at the suggestions of your strange fancies. I shall not fight with you; and, perhaps, I may spare you also, in consideration of a cause—of another person, whose life is worth a thousand such as yours and mine. Let me pass, sir."

"You shall not pass, by heaven you shall not! this is mere mockery, this affected forbearance; or, perhaps, I give it too mild a term: you may not choose, belike, to risk that life which promises you so much pleasure as the reward of falsehood:" and he added, as he swore a deep and passionate oath, "Draw, or you die!"

Radcliffe did draw his rapier, as he felt it necessary to do so in his own defence; but still attempting to act calmly, he continued, in a mild tone of expostulation, "You may dearly repent this madness: I beseech you, for your own sake, to forbear this quarrel. If our debate is political, we may find a better opportunity than the present to risk our lives for a public cause: here, there can be none. My party is triumphant now, and it is not the loss of my life that can shake its security. If you so much love your king, live for him, and do not brawl, for the sake of his honour, with every man who may chance to think Charles Stuart, with all his virtues—and I grant he has many—an arbitrary ruler and a tyrant."

"My quarrel with you, sir, at this moment, is not political," said Elford; "though, did I need to push it on that score, I could find an ample apology in the strong resentment I feel for the death of Sir Shilton Calmady, who was murdered by your hand."

"Murdered!" exclaimed Radcliffe; "that is a word I bear from no man, far less from an enemy, in reference to any act of mine. Sir Shilton Calmady was, unfortunately, killed by me; but we fought openly, man to man: my own life was in as much danger as his. He or I must have fallen: fortune gave me the victory and him a grave. Such an act, unhappy though it may be, merits not the name of murder. But even this insult, this false and bitter calumny, I will bear in patience, from you. Let me pass on; and remember, that if I do bear it in patience, it is not for your own sake, but for that of the beautiful, the good, the tender-hearted Agnes."

Hearing Agnes thus spoken of by the man Elford believed to be the rival who had so dishonourably supplanted him in her affections, added fuel to fire; anger flashed from his eyes, he trembled with passion, and could scarcely pour out the torrent of his indignation in articulate words, as he said, "This last insult is beyond all bearing: not content with vilely betraying me, and seducing her love, you now, to my very face, dare applaud her who has done me such wrong, and that, too, in a way as if I would accept her pity, after being robbed of her affections. She is false, and you are coward, as well as villain, if you refuse to answer it."

"That is a character I will never bear," said Radcliffe, who

now fired in his turn: "if I fall, those live who will do justice to my memory. But if you fall, thank your own rashness, and call on God to pardon you; for in this action you will be guilty of your own death. Now, sir, I am prepared."

Several passes ensued: Radcliffe, though brave, was not so able at fence as his adversary, and would, in all probability, soon have found his disadvantage, had not the intemperance of Elford's passions in some measure baffled his own skill. A cool adversary is generally a sure one; but he was neither in the present instance. Enraged to find Radcliffe, whom he had ever held a contemptible swordsman, still kept his ground, and parried his thrusts, he rushed forward with the intent to close with him, and by main strength bear down his opponent to the earth; in doing this, Radcliffe was soon disarmed, and received a slight wound from Elford's weapon.

At this moment the battle was interrupted; for the waiting-maid, who had covertly facilitated the retreat of Radcliffe after his interview with her mistress, hearing high words in the plantation, feared she knew not what, and, running back to the house with all speed, gave the alarm to Agnes and Robina, and all set off together towards the scene of action. Three women to two men were more than odds enough to end a quarrel. Agnes guessed in a moment that some misapprehension respecting her late interview with Radcliffe might have given rise to the duel; and, wishing to calm Elford's mind, she whispered Robina, "for heaven's sake to get Amias back to the house, and leave her to calm the fury of young Elford." Women are quick at understanding hints where rivalry may be in question. Robina saw it all; and with the utmost readiness now insisted that Master Radcliffe should go with her to let the housekeeper tie up his arm, which bled fast from the wound. Willing, perhaps, not to add to the distress of Agnes, whose extreme agitation and pale cheeks told her state of mind, he consented, and left her with Elford, as Robina and the damsel in waiting conducted him off the ground to receive charitable assistance at the house.

A few passionate expressions, dropped by Elford, declared to her at once the cause of his anger; and though from the promise she had given not to reveal having received the letter for her father she could not be entirely explicit respecting the motive that had led Amias to seek the present interview, yet, nevertheless, when pressed home on the subject by the jealousy of Elford, she could not positively deny that he had once regarded her with some affection. However, she so earnestly, and so solemnly, assured him, that her faith and her affections were true to him as ever, that he became in some measure

satisfied and reassured; though nothing would persuade him Radcliffe could be so heroically generous as to prefer the happiness of the woman he loved to his own. This was certainly great injustice in Elford: but though he was noble-minded, yet was he a human being; and as his feelings were strong and unbridled, even so were his faults. He was of an ardent, but, unfortunately, of a jealous temper, and not altogether devoid of the vice of suspicion. Nothing could prevail with him to think of Amias as he deserved.

He feared she might be led to renounce him, when the dreaded hour of Radcliffe's coming of age should arrive, and give him the means of seeking her: he would be a match far more advantageous in the eyes of the world than the beggared royalist, Elford, could ever hope to be; and he knew not how soon his father's danger and his own might oblige both to quit the kingdom.

Reginald openly told Agnes his fear of these things, and conjured her, for the sake of his peace, if she really wished to make him happy, to give up all intercourse, even that of friendship, with his dreaded and artful rival, for so he persisted in calling Radcliffe.

"For my sake, Agnes, for your own," he said, "and even for his, I would conjure you to avoid him; you know what are my feelings where you are concerned. I shall never think you are securely mine so long as I see Amias Radcliffe in pursuit of you. Fear, then, to exasperate passions thus headstrong; nothing but the certainty that you will never see him more can subdue them. I love you, perhaps, too well. Strong as my affections, even so is my jealousy of losing you. Fear, then, to rouse so fierce a flame, and to fan it into a fire that may destroy one or both of us."

"But there is no cause for jealousy," said Agnes; "there is no reason——"

"Do not talk of reason to feelings that have been harassed and irritated like mine," said Elford. "Perhaps jealousy may be in my nature; perhaps it may be a temptation of the arch-enemy himself to lead me on to ruin. Whatever it is, I am, I confess, a slave to its dictates; nor do you, Agnes, go the way to cure me of them, else you would at once tell me all the truth."

"These words are dreadful," said Agnes. "Think, did you speak them to any ear but mine, how much your purpose might be mistaken; how much your character would suffer, in thus setting forth its worst feelings in colours so dark and terrible. Oh, Elford! did but my father hear you, he might think you to be capable of shedding human blood at the fierce instigations of a cruel and unreasonable passion."

"And such, I fear, might be the consequence," said Elford; "Radcliffe's life or mine might become the forfeit. To avoid so fearful an alternative, I now shew you the worst part of myself without disguise. Avoid, then, the cause that would provoke it. I am an Elford. Strong passions, deep feelings, and, if the world speaks truth, some touch even of madness itself, in moments of passion, forms the character, you will say the vice, of our race. Yet, Agnes, we are not, I trust, compounded of what is wrong, without some redeeming qualities. Our affections are constant, even as they are strong. Our devotion in a good cause has kept an undeviating course. You knew my temper. You accepted and returned my love; with all its frailties you accepted it. Cherish, then, what you find in me good and worthy, and forbear to awaken the destroyer—jealousy; it will slumber, unless you disturb its repose. Adieu! be happy, but beware."

"I cannot bear to leave you thus," said Agnes; "Amias Radcliffe (I will speak it, for in doing so I speak but truth)—Amias is noble-minded; perhaps, Elford, more just than you are. Do not, therefore, because you find, for I cannot deny it, that he had once some regard for me, think him, on that account, capable of dishonour, or me of falsehood. Respect his character, though you differ from him in opinion; and do not risk your own life, or seek his, on a cause of quarrel so rash and groundless."

"I will not willingly do so," said Elford: "yet, Agnes, beware; for should we meet again, his life or mine may be lost. Farewell; I must leave you."

Elford and Agnes parted, after an affectionate adieu. Greatly distressed and agitated, she returned to the house, and determined to open her heart, as far as she could do so with honour, to her friend Robina, and to ask her advice.

She found Radcliffe's wound had been dressed, and after thanking the ladies for their care, he expressed his acknowledgments to the good housekeeper, who had acted the part of surgeon on the present occasion. She insisted on his taking a reviving cordial, and that he should rest himself in her chamber for a while. At length, fearing his absence from Warleigh would alarm Gertrude, and render his godfather suspicious, Radcliffe prepared to return without further delay. Thus for the present ended a quarrel between two young men, the extraordinary consequences of which it will be hereafter our task to record in these pages.

CHAPTER XXIX.

'Tis told me, he hath very oft of late
Given private time to you; and you yourself
Have of your audience been most free and bounteous:
If it be so (as so 'tis put on me,
And that in way of caution), I must tell you
You do not understand yourself so clearly
As it behoves my daughter, and your honour:
What is between you? Give me up the truth. —
He hath, my lord, of late, made many tenders
Of his affection to me. SHAKSPERE.

Robina Edgcumbe, to whom Agnes imparted all her troubles, was, though a lively, and even thoughtless girl, a very good one. When anything serious was submitted to her consideration, she could be both an honest and a prudent counsellor. Acting, therefore, on such principles in the present instance, she advised her friend Agnes (and we wish all young ladies had as just confidants in like matters) to trust the knowledge of the whole affair to her worthy father, and to be guided, in her future conduct, by his opinion.

Agnes on the same day that she received this advice, placed the letter for her father, with several others that had arrived in the regular way, upon a table in the chamber he occupied as his own at the hunting-seat of Sir Piers. The next morning she was closeted with him; and informed him that on the previous day, she had seen 'Master Amias Radcliffe (who had saved her life whilst she lived at Exeter with her aged relative), and she feared the interview, in which there was really no harm, must have excited the jealousy of Reginald Elford; as, on Amias leaving the house, Reginald had drawn upon and wounded him; and had afterwards assured her that, unless she forebore all acquaintance with the young gentleman to whom she was so much bound in gratitude, the most dreadful consequences would inevitably ensue.

Sir Hugh Piper heard his daughter's confession, as all fathers ought to do who would encourage and preserve the confidence of their children, with kindness and consideration.

Sir Hugh said nothing to Agnes of the letter he had received, having no suspicion but that it came in the ordinary course; but its contents not only surprised but confounded

him. It appeared that the anonymous writer was well acquainted with certain schemes then in agitation: Sir Hugh had his full share in these schemes, and he was now warned to avoid a snare spread for him at a certain time and place—the writer had not stated by whom. Secresy was enjoined, or no further warning would be given, if necessity required it. Wondering at the circumstance, the knowledge the letter displayed of the most hidden plans, and above all, at the warning so vaguely, so darkly hinted, yet evidently from so kind a motive, Sir Hugh Piper carefully concealed the paper, and resolved to observe both the warning and the secresy enjoined; leaving the rest to that good Providence which is on all occasions the only sure safeguard against treachery and malice. Satisfied with this resolution, he prepared to take leave of his kind host, Sir Piers Edgcumbe, as he had to return to Plymouth, before setting out for the house of a friend near Sheepstor, where the affairs he had so much at heart demanded his presence without delay.

The heart of Agnes was greatly softened by the indulgence with which he had received her confession, and she now spoke with the utmost duty and affection, expressing her anxiety to know where her father might be going.

"Do not inquire, my child," said Sir Hugh; "I am going where honour calls me, as well as duty. That being the case, Agnes, pray God for thy father's safety and good success; since remember that our prayers are nothing, unless, as the Gospel teaches, our deeds go with them. And remember, girl, thy father does not talk of Scripture example as the rascally puritans do: they can find no text but such a one as may sanction the spilling of blood, or the pulling down the church that condemns their evil deeds. Now I say our prayers are nothing, unless, like the honest Centurion, we fear God enough whilst we pray, to do his bidding whilst we act. Cornelius gave alms as well as offered up prayers; and I will warrant me, never ran away from an enemy, but kept his post, and did his duty as a good soldier in his calling. I never yet could find in Scripture any text, Agnes, that bade me rise up and pull down the king and the government, as the godly have done in their generation. But I must away: I have a word for thee, child, and that for thy own sake."

"And for yours, too, I hope, my dear father," said Agnes; "for you are so kind to me, even to my faults, that if I did not feel a pleasure in obeying you, I should be the most ungrateful child in the world. I hope I am not; though I have confessed to you that I regarded Elford dearly, perhaps too dearly for my own peace. Yet you shall guide me in all things; and by your authority I will act."

"Learn, then, girl," said Sir Hugh, "to think more of thyself, and less of thy lover, and not to be studying his whims, at every turn, as old dames do their monkeys, lest they do mischief. Be thyself, Agnes: act honestly, but act with some spirit; and fear not to ask any gentleman, to whom civility is due, how he fares, or to give him the time of the day, in courtesy, lest thy hot-headed bachelor, Master Reginald, should rise up in the yellow stockings of jealousy upon it. I say, girl, do not give up thy good sense, thy free spirit, and thy open-hearted innocence, for any mad lover of them all."

"Yet I were loth, sir," said Agnes, "to become the cause of strife; and as you sometimes have said that when I lived away from you at Exeter there was a too general admittance of company, a——"

"Nay, mistake me not, Agnes," replied Sir Hugh; "it is not because I would have you entertain fair speech with every worthy gentleman, that I would, therefore, have you too liberal in words or favour. Far from it. Young maids should be like young blossoms, modest as well as lovely. I would not have thee make thy company too free, nor hold it cheap as an alewife's, open at all hours, and to all comers. No Agnes, a retired life, housewifely and staid, is that which best becomes a woman. Those who are often seen abroad, and stale themselves by being ever common to the public gaze, lose that respect which follows a modest and retired behaviour. Let thy own good thoughts and innocent employments be ever thy best company. Keep thy eyes from folly, and let them be more open to see perfections in thy virtuous associates than in thyself; so shalt thou avoid that greatest stumbling-block of youth, too much opinion of thyself: it is unseemly, Agnes, in man; but in woman it blots her fairness, makes envy keep an ever open eye to search out her faults: dost thou mark me?"

"I do, sir, most heedfully," she replied.

"And for thy ears, Agnes, make them deaf to flattery: not that I would have thee indifferent to wholesome praise; as that, deserved, nourishes in youth the rising promise of its virtues, even as sweet showers nourish the young blossoms upon which they fall. No, Agnes, the praise which is honest hath God's favour, and thy own good for its end: but flattery is born of the devil; for it is one of those baits he hangs on the tongue of deceit, to catch the maiden's mind and make shipwreck of her honesty. If, therefore, men tell thee thou art fair, ever think that it is virtue which shall keep you so; and that, even when the golden locks of youth change to the grey of age. I must hence: remember my counsel, and heaven bless you my girl, for you art good and innocent."

"But whither go you, sir?" said Agnes; "I shall have little happiness till I see you safe returned."

"Whither I go is not the question," replied Sir Hugh: "one thing more; mark me—touching this Reginald Elford, you know my reasons for thinking the troth you have plighted to him ill advised. I would that I had known all, before you pledged your word to him. But you were then under the care of your grandam, and she was more to blame than yourself; she suffered you to run wild at Exeter: I would you had never been with her. She knew of this young fellow's suit?"

"She sanctioned it, sir," replied Agnes; "else, indeed, I had not listened to it. But she said that you had never seen him, to judge of his qualities yourself; yet his general character was well known to you, for every one respected it. His family was noble, and so she thought you would desire the match as earnestly as she did, and ——"

"And the young man having a handsome face and a smooth tongue to plead his cause, and thy grandmother seconding it, thou didst hearken to him, Agnes, and gave him thy word frankly to be his wife. Was it not so, Agnes?"

"Indeed, sir, I fear, I think, I never thought it would displease you. I ——"

"Nor would it, but for thy own sake, child," said Sir Hugh. "But my objections are many. First, Agnes, you must learn, that though not nobly born, I am, I hope, an honest man; and may be something of a proud one in an honest way. Know, then, I would not give my daughter, my pretty blossom, to be engrafted on the stock of a prince, did he disdain her alliance, or hold her cheap, because, forsooth, her father was not right honourable Sir Hugh born and bred. No, Agnes, old Hugh Piper, the Plymouth merchant, who ruined himself in support of his king, of his church, of his country, shall never stoop to a private meanness, no more than he would to a public one, in these truckling, trickstering times. Sir Marmaduke Elford is now, men say, more ruined, and certainly more persecuted, than myself: his rank has procured for him that distinction. He is, they say, half crazed too; from my soul I pity the cause of all these misfortunes that have befallen him. But I must not forget that when Sir Marmaduke was in prosperity he disdained to connect his son with my daughter; and I then resolved, and still hold my purpose, that I will never give my consent till he is sufficiently himself, should better times return, to know thy merit, and freely to bestow his sanction upon the match. This is my resolution; and for the young gentleman himself ——"

"He is most worthy, sir," said Agnes: "some faults he

may have, but who is without faults? and when you think of all he has suffered in these times, and by the Roundheads, you can scarcely wonder that he should mistrust even the best of them."

"I don't wonder at it at all, my child," said Sir Hugh: "I would not trust a Roundhead rascal, though he were my own brother; and though this Master Amias Radcliffe, who, I have heard, can swim like a duck, jumped into the Ex, and pulled thee out (as old Orgar, Sir Piers Edgcumbe's rough water-dog, would have done as well as he); and though thou art a grateful girl for it, and I am thankful, too, now I know Radcliffe was the man who did this; yet after all, Agnes, he fought against King Charles, and that is a wickedness which, if thou wert free to-morrow, and he a duke, should have NO from my lips, even wert thou as much in love with him as he is with thee. Radcliffe is not for thee, even if ——"

"I never thought of him, sir," said Agnes; "never for a moment, more than became me in gratitude for the act of service he did me, and as a young gentleman who, though unhappily misled in his public opinions, had still many private virtues."

"I like not such private virtues," said Sir Hugh, "as take no hold on a man's public conduct; such, at the best, are but like fruits, tempting to the eye, rotten at the core. No, Agnes, give me a man who deems his virtues, public or private, due to his king and his country; and one who thinks rebel opinions unlawful, and I will warrant me never falls into rebel acts. But it is of Reginald Elford I would speak. I have other objections to him, not yet named. It is whispered that the Elford family have, for many generations, been liable to a little unsettlement here in the upper story," continued Sir Hugh, touching his own forehead: "the passionate are never the reasonable. In him, I fear, it is the old infirmity of his race. I am serious, Agnes; I like not these wild starts of passion and of jealousy in young Elford. I like not his drawing on Master Radcliffe, for no other cause on earth than that the young gentleman held speech with thee. Had he taken him up at bilbo for the honour of the King, and the good of the old cause, there would have been some sense, some reason in the act. But for a word spoken to a chittling like thee! 'tis shewing a temper I like not, and a degree of passionate jealousy that might hereafter lead to the worst consequences."

"I hope not, my dear father," said Agnes; "and do think kindly of Reginald. I grant it was wrong in him; but only remember that a temper like his, high-spirited and fiery, is apt to grow irritable under the persecution of these times. Do think of him charitably."

"What! when he is ready to run upon unreasonsble quarrels that may end in murder?" said Sir Hugh. "I have no charity for any such tempers; and I would be loth to commit the happiness of my child to the keeping of a man who cannot keep his own passions within compass and reason. Remember my words, Agnes, for I must at last be gone. Act honestly, but do not act slavishly. I love you too well to break your heart, or to see you give up the respect you owe to yourself for the whims of another."

"I will endeavour to do all you tell me," said Agnes.

"Do so," replied Sir Hugh; "and mind, your lover shall never have my consent, should times mend to think of wooing, till his father's pride comes down to feel you honour his son in accepting him, and are not alone honoured by him. In that case, I don't say I should refuse my consent. But till those piping times of peace come, Agnes, I would have you rather shun than seek young Elford's courtship; though in honour and affection I grant it would be wrong entirely to turn him off, for such a small matter as that of his father's being ruined. I don't say it is a small misfortune to him; but generosity forbids your thinking it a large one, as you are bound to the son, by the promise you so imprudently made to him in his days of prosperity. And now, one command more, and I am really gone, or I shall talk here all day long."

"I will obey you, my dear father," said Agnes, "command what you may; for you are so kind to me, that obedience becomes a pleasure."

"I dare say it does," said Sir Hugh, "when I am suffering you still to think of your favourite sweetheart. But what I would say now concerns his rival. I have no liking for Master Radcliffe, because he was a rebel at Ford House; but still he did bring thee safe out of the water, be he therefore, Roundhead or Cavalier, for that service, truly we owe him much. Should he, then, ever see thee, or speak to thee with civility, don't run away and be ill-mannered, for fear Master Elford put his finger in his eye upon it, or cry 'Draw' to Radcliffe behind the next duelling hedge in the parish. Your thoughts are free from all deceit: let your manners, therefore, be frank, courteous, and open; and fear no lover, nor madman into the bargain, as long as your old father lives to protect you. Farewell."

"Farewell, my dear father; may heaven bless and protect you, and bring you safe home again, and soon, since you will not tell me where you are going."

"Farewell, my child; and when thou goest home, Agnes, tell thy love story at full length to thy mother, Dame Sibella.

I will prepare her to hear the confession kindly; and remember, a maid's best counsellor in these matters is a good and prudent mother; and thine is both, child, to thee; so farewell."

Sir Hugh departed, leaving his daughter extremely anxious as to the object of his secret journey from home, and not a little pained to learn the opinions her father had so freely expressed respecting the pride of Sir Marmaduke Elford, the madness of his family, and the passions of his son. Her own good sense told her, that all her father had said on these several points was but too well founded in truth; and the conviction that it was so now, cost her many a sigh and many a tear.

companion shuddered as she heard distinctly a deep moaning from within. The door opened, and both glided cautiously along. "Better let me go forward and apprise him," said the widow: "the surprise may be too much for his weak condition. Remember the vault I told you of: it lies open on your right hand; beware how you pass it."

The masked lady followed her conductress, and as she did so a sense of awe, not unallied to fear, stole over her feelings. The air of the church was cold, and all was profoundly still. The soft and chastened light of the moon streamed through the windows, plainly shewing the havoc that had been so lately made, as many portions of the beautifully painted glass appeared with large holes in the midst, admitting the current of air that sung and whistled through them, whilst shattered fragments hung only by the lead work, and seemed ready to fall at every gust that made them tremble in its passage. Those parts of the church which received no illumination from the light of the moon, lay dusky and obscure, and not devoid of terror, as it was impossible to see who or what might be lurking in their dark recesses; and a concealed lurker was, at this moment, a thing much to be feared. The great door of the church had been injured by the troopers: it was therefore possible (though Mistress Raleigh hoped not probable) that some one might steal in by that entrance, and hide himself, if he chose to do so, in the more obscure parts of the building. She whispered her thoughts to her companion, who, easily infected with her terrors, stood a moment and listened: so great is the power of imagination, that she now fancied she saw a moving shadow cross from the remotest aisle, and glide away behind the pillars at the lower end of the church. But no footfall came upon her ear: it must then, she thought, be fancy, and again she motioned to Mistress Raleigh to lead on.

She did so, with great caution; for having no light, and fearing the open vault, there was some danger in advancing, till the cloud, which, at this instant obscured the face of the moon, should have passed away, and the full and clear radiance of her light might return without interruption. At length they stood before a low arched doorway that led into the belfry of the tower: as Mistress Raleigh gently opened the portal, her companion perceived the rays of a light that was burning within. She paused a moment to look upon the inmate of this cold and dreary retreat.

It was an old man who sat reclining on a heap of straw. His beard was long and grey; his locks hanging disordered about his head. The furrows of his cheek looked deep and care-worn, and added, in appearance, many years to his age.

There was a lofty and characteristic expression about his face and head, but an unnatural light was in his eye, that had in it the false fire and the restless wildness of an unsound mind, or at least of one whose steadiness of purpose, or of thought, could not be deemed of long or certain endurance. A heavy sigh burst from his bosom as Mistress Raleigh approached, and said, in a mild voice, "Thank heaven, Sir Marmaduke, you are safe. I am come, you see, as I promised, and here is with me the lady I told you of, who would have seen you on the day of the revel, had she dared do so with safety to yourself."

Sir Marmaduke looked up, but with that sort of senseless gaze, as if he had not fully understood the words of Mistress Raleigh, and still less did he seem to take an interest in them. By the light that burnt on an old bench, standing near, he perceived the lady in the mask; he looked at her a moment without speaking, and then cast his eyes upon the ground.

She saw the state of his feelings by his indifference; and approaching in the kindest manner, held out her hand to him, and then removed her mask, as she said, in a voice whose tremulous accents spoke her emotion, "My dear uncle, do you not know me? Look upon me again."

He did so, and exclaimed in a manner that shewed returning sense and feeling, "Gertrude Copplestone! are you the lady who take an interest in such a poor, care-worn, miserable man as I am?"

"Oh, my dear uncle," replied Gertrude, as she fell on her knees before him, "do not speak thus: can I ever forget you, who were as a second father to me in my childhood, and under whose roof I received those early lessons that taught my mind on what rock to rest my hopes for safety in times so stormy and so dangerous as these? I am, I know I am, the daughter of one who has not, alas! followed in the good path from which you never deviated. To him, as a child, I owe, and I trust I shall ever pay, all duty, all obedience, that becomes me. But there is one duty still higher, that which I owe to God and to my king. Gratitude for benefits received is God's law, nor will I ever break it towards you whatever may be the consequence. I know in what I do I have to struggle with contrary feelings; to reconcile them is a task beyond my simple skill: but let me never cease to remember what I owe to that cause which every true subject, every true Christian heart, must feel is a cause sacred to God; when his church, and his deputed majesty on earth lies wounded, bleeding, reviled, and threatened with total destruction by the persecution, the violence of man."

Sir Marmaduke Elford, effectually recalled to consciousness by this emphatic address, affectionately embraced his niece: she sat down by him, held his reverend head upon her bosom, and dropped tears as she felt those which fell from his eyes upon her hand. Mistress Raleigh, ever delicate in her conduct, was sensibly moved at witnessing this meeting between the uncle and the niece; and unwilling to disturb feelings she held so sacred, stood aloof, silent and observant, whilst they spoke freely together, after a separation that had been spent in sorrow and in fear.

"Thy disposition was ever good and noble, Gertrude," said Sir Marmaduke; "but tell me, for what purpose are you here at such an hour? I understood from Mistress Raleigh, who has more than once concealed me during these miserable times, that the place I had chosen for my refuge, at the hut, was dangerous. She secreted me here, in the church tower; a concealment where many a godly divine has found shelter when he had no other home to receive him. Here she has watched over me, brought me food, till some better refuge could be pointed out for me by my son. Hitherto he has been disappointed; for the gentlemen who are active in the cause of the king fear to stir till they can act openly; and a price is fixed on my head, old and grey as it is. Yet even here I have been exposed to much danger."

Mistress Raleigh now spoke. "When I proposed the church tower for your concealment, Sir Marmaduke, I had no idea that any riot would have taken place on the Sunday of the revel. It was a mercy you escaped on that day, when so many of your enemies were at hand; and that you did escape can only have been by the providence of Him who watches over all for good."

"I was concealed, indeed," said Sir Marmaduke; "for on that day, Gertrude, Mistress Raleigh apprised me of my danger; and for some hours I lay hidden within a vault that had been lately opened in this church to receive a corpse. The living and the dead found company together. Nay, do not shudder; a charnel-house is a better refuge, in these times, than a prison at the mercy of tyrants. Oh, Gertrude, I could live for ever with the dead, if, by so doing, I could lose the memory of one dreadful hour!"

Gertrude saw the fearful circumstance to which his thoughts now reverted; and begged him to think of his departure, as she had been so fortunate as to secure for him a place of retreat. But it would not do: the chord had been touched to which all his feelings vibrated, and he was not so easily to be turned aside from his constant and melancholy thoughts.

"Gertrude," he said, "you shall speak of her, for you ever loved her, and she was to you as a mother in tenderness and care. You have not forgotten her?"

"No, sir," replied Gertrude, who now saw that, probably, his feelings would be more wounded by her silence than if she shewed some grateful recollection of his unfortunate wife. "When memory shall be no more, then will I forget her, but not till then. She is now the companion of those saints and angels, whose heavenly spirits she resembled here on earth.

"Alas, sir," she continued, "let me beseech you not to dwell on thoughts like these at such an hour; though they should give you comfort rather than pain. But think still, I would implore you, of those whose happiness so much depends on your safety. You may still be called upon to do more service; think of this, and let it rouse your spirit. Shake off these vain and hopeless sorrows, and play the man; for should the king be spared ——"

"True, true, Gertrude," said Sir Marmaduke; "but will they spare him—those who never spare? the king, he is in their hands. Yes, I will go forth—I will be myself; for whilst he lives I may act to do him service: when that is done, there remains for me a grave, and more welcome shall it be than a bed of down to this old and weary head."

"Such thoughts and feelings," said Gertrude, "are more noble than to despair. Here, uncle, wrap yourself in this cloak. Follow me; old Anthony, my faithful servant, waits without; he holds horses for our purpose. We must speedily mount them. Sir William Bastard has concerted with me a plan for your retreat. I am this night to guide you to a particular spot he has pointed out to me, where he will meet us. One of his people will return with me to Warleigh, so that I may be there before the sun is up, and this night my father is from home. When your life was at stake, I dared trust no one to guide you but myself. There was indeed a friend, who though an enemy to your cause, has so much of honour in his temper that I might have trusted him; but he has been wounded in the arm in some foolish quarrel. Thus, therefore, was I compelled, though a woman, to act for you in this emergency; for Anthony, faithful as he is, is too old, too feeble to do you service in a matter of so much moment. Are you ready? it grows late, we must no longer stay."

Sir Marmaduke rose up, wrapped himself in the large cloak Mistress Raleigh had provided, and seemed collected in mind and firm in manner, as, gratefully thanking her for all her cares for his safety, he bade her farewell, promising, if possible, that she should hear of his welfare, and that he would never

forget her kindness. This ended, they all left the church in profound silence. Sir Marmaduke took his seat upon the horse that had been ridden by old Anthony, and Gertrude mounted her own, charging her faithful servant, as she did so, to keep watch near a certain door at Warleigh, in order to be ready to admit her, as privately as possible, on her return, as she had stolen out unknown to any one but himself, after having retired to her own chamber for the night. She now bade farewell to Mistress Raleigh, who hastened back to the cottage.

Gertrude rode forward; for every step of the way they had to take was perfectly well known to her. Sir Marmaduke followed, and neither spoke, lest any one should be lurking near to discover their retreat. Whilst they thus rode on, the thoughts of Gertrude were busily employed. She knew the conduct she had of late pursued (unknown as it was to her father) might be liable to severe reprehension from him; but a higher duty, even that she owed to God, justified her in what she had done. Sir John Copplestone had not fully admitted his daughter to share in his counsels; of his more secret designs she knew nothing; and of those less carefully concealed she understood but a part. Nevertheless, from late occurrences enough had become obvious to a mind of sound judgment and quick penetration, like hers, to give her the most serious alarm.

She knew Reginald Elford was marked out for the prey of Coleman: she had saved him once, and hoped her cautions would put him on his guard for the future. The dangers of Sir Marmaduke were notorious; for the parliamentary general, Ruthen, who had busied himself in the west during the late troubles, had sworn not to spare Sir Marmaduke if taken alive; as an example to all such mad traitors to the commons in the county.

In saving an uncle to whom she was so bound, and who suffered in that cause for which Gertrude, had she been a man, would have gladly died, appeared to her unprejudiced mind as no want of duty to her father. She was, indeed, careful not to commit her father; for though she entertained some dreadful suspicions concerning his designs, she had not dropped a word of them to any human being: they were lodged in her own breast, where they caused her fearful anxieties, and rendered her more than ever watchful of his conduct in his least action, and also observant of the conduct of those who were about him, or who frequented his house, at such a time. In an unguarded moment, Coleman, when he last waited on Sir John Copplestone, had dropped some words, not designed for her ear, which had given her serious alarm for

the safety of Sir Hugh Piper. The letter she had written and sent, in so mysterious a manner, to that gallant royalist, had been the only means she could devise to warn him of his danger; for her sense of duty would not let her name her father as being a party privy to the transaction.

Gertrude felt throughout that she had a difficult part to sustain: but she determined to act rightly and prudently, and in doing so, to trust the result to God.

With such generous feelings of self-devotion, and such high thoughts, did Gertrude now conduct her uncle to meet Sir William Bastard—a royalist gentleman to whom she had applied in her extremity to receive and protect him from the imminent danger in which he stood; for Mistress Raleigh hourly feared he would be detected in his concealment in the church. In happier times, this young and gallant cavalier had been on terms of intimacy and friendship at Warleigh; but the civil wars had caused fearful divisions between Sir William Bastard and Sir John Copplestone. During certain negotiations respecting the sequestered royalists, Sir William (who had a near kinsman about Fairfax) had exposed a most nefarious transaction, on the part of Sir John, in levying fines on the Cavaliers, since his purpose had been no other than private pillage, under the name of public forfeiture.

For this discovery, more than for any political difference in opinion, Copplestone held Sir William in the most deadly hatred; he had openly avowed he did so. Of late, however, since he had grown cold to the parliament, he had shewn no disinclination to become reconciled to his enemy. But the young cavalier (though for the sake of the cause he had espoused he did not entirely withhold himself from these overtures), nevertheless, could not be brought to treat Sir John with the same terms of friendship that had once subsisted between them. He rather treated him as the barons of old did the free bands—as persons useful and necessary in their mercenary service, to forward a good cause, but ever to be watched with an eye of jealousy and suspicion.

Gertrude knew this; and however much she might regret it, yet her sense of justice would not allow her wholly to condemn Sir William, as she was not altogether ignorant of what had passed between that gentleman and her father. The young cavalier had consented to receive and protect her uncle; but solely on condition that his doing so should not be communicated to Sir John Copplestone. Gertrude gladly promised secresy, since she deemed it the safest plan for all parties concerned in the affair. The place of rendezvous, where her uncle was to meet the young cavalier, had been

named by him: Sir William had offered, would she guide her uncle to the spot, himself to escort her safe back to Warleigh; but this she declined from motives of maidenly delicacy; and only requested that one or two of his most trusted followers might be charged with that office, without knowing who was the lady committed to their care. Sir William Bastard promised compliance; and Gertrude was now on her way to lead her uncle towards the spot where she hoped he would meet his friend and protector.

CHAPTER XXXI.

That man of loneliness and mystery,
Scarce seen to smile, and seldom heard to sigh;
Whose name appals the fiercest of his crew,
And tints each swarthy cheek with sallower hue;
Still sways their souls with that commanding art
That dazzles, leads, yet chills the vulgar heart.
What is that spell that thus his lawless train
Confess and envy, yet oppose in vain?
What should it be, that thus their faith can bind;
The power of thought—the magic of the mind.

BYRON.

GERTRUDE and Sir Marmaduke had for some time continued their way down by-roads and unfrequented paths, till at length they came into a more open country: a wild heath was before them, towering heights in the distance, and gently swelling hills on either side. At the extremity of this heath they had to pass into a deep ravine, overhung with rocks, that led the way into a yet wilder part of the country, where there was a thick wood with many outlets, one of the latter being near the place appointed for the rendezvous by Sir William Bastard.

The scene which lay before them was well calculated to fill the mind with serious impressions at such a time. The moonlight slept sweetly on the surrounding hills; but through the misty veil of night the extent of the wild heath was indefinable, and assumed, therefore, a character of importance and even of grandeur which invariably belongs to objects whose bounds are unlimited, and whose outline is obscure. A brook that rushed down from one of the neighbouring hills, and skirted the road as it brawled on amid fragments of rock and stones, sparkled and flashed in the moonlight, forming a lively contrast to the quiet and reposing moorland scene around. The stars shone in subdued splendour to that of the bright and full lustre of the moon, as she rode high and unclouded through a sea of azure light. In the extreme distance arose the heights of Dartmoor, partly obscured in shadow, but their summits glittering and white, as they caught and reflected many a silvery beam. The whole scene was beautiful, yet softened and subdued by distance and the solemn shades of night, even as time and a calm spirit soften

and harmonise the past and distant events of human life, whose intensity, either of joy or of sorrow, has been once felt strong and clear as the fervid suns of the noonday.

They soon reached the steep descent where the road wound through a deep ravine, and at length gained its extremity as they turned into one of those thickly wooded, rocky valleys, so picturesque and so peculiarly beautiful in the matchless county of Devon. Here again was deep obscurity; for though, at intervals, a stream of light shot through some open space in the woods, and glittered on the boughs and foliage wet with dew, or reposed on some grassy bank in coldness and in silence, yet these cheering circumstances were but partially found. The low murmur and the sullen rush of the wind (for it was now somewhat risen), as it lingered among the woods, had, at the hour of night, a voice in it more than its own: to the fugitive and the wanderer, it spoke things of terror. Gertrude felt this, though not so much for herself, as she listened, fearing lest she might mistake its sounds; for once or twice she fancied she heard a human voice, that mingled hoarsely with that of the breeze, and again she thought she was deceived, and that her own apprehensions had given her an alarm wholly unfounded in reason.

Yet her alarms were not diminished, when the moon suddenly became obscured, as a mass of circling clouds, before white and silvered by her lustre, passed over her disk, shewing themselves dark, and rendering equally so the gorgeous planet; even as those stormy and lowering spirits of the time displayed their own dark character, as they cast into their shadows the majesty of England's king. They were now in the very heart of the wood; black rocks started wildly up in every direction; the winds moaned amid them, and the rush of a struggling and foaming stream broke the silence of night in a voice as of tumult and of anger. The path still lay before them, but the eye could not penetrate its obscurity: the heart of Gertrude beat with apprehension, for her ear could now alone watch for any just cause of alarm.

Alarm was, indeed, at hand, and became visible even to the eye; for on the road turning abruptly round the base of one of those giant masses of rock before noticed, that part of it hitherto unseen was distinctly visible, illumined by the red glare of a bright and burning torch. Before Gertrude could speak, before she could even turn to Sir Marmaduke, the broken fragments of rock, and some old trees that lay around, seemed suddenly to live and move, for each gave up a ruffian, who, starting on his feet, sprung upon the travellers, as if eager to make them a prey.

All resistance was vain: there was nothing to be done but to yield to a destiny that was inevitable. Gertrude knew this: she neither uttered cry nor word; but instantly dismounting, at the command of one who appeared to be a leader of this savage crew, implored him, in a few but emphatic terms, to shew mercy to herself and to her aged companion. Sir Marmaduke was forced from his horse, as he madly attempted to draw his weapon, and was instantly deprived of his arms. Gertrude looked up at the man who had made her prisoner, and shuttered as she heheld him. She had good cause to do so, for surely a more ferocious or uncouth fellow had never met the eye of woman, in such a time and place, to fill her heart with dismay. We must here pause a moment, to say something of him and his associates.

He was tall and stout, and his countenance swarthy as that of a mountain bandit of Italian story. His hair black, matted, and curly, hung long and wild about his head, and down his back. His throat was thick and bare, the face broad, and the forehead high, yet the brows hung dark and lowering over a large, coal black eye, full of fire. The somewhat broad mouth shewed a marked and confirmed character; thick mustachios were on the upper lip; and the chin was fringed by a short, rough beard, not unlike the bristles on a boar's back.

The expression that gave life and animation to features such as we have described was that of ferocity so absolute, so determined, that to look upon the man and to feel uncertain about the character of his mind was a thing impossible; and to have done so would have been an offence to him, so much did he value himself upon that stern and reckless daring that had procured for him a reputation which was at once the aim and the glory of his life.

He wore a steel morion upon his head; a leather coat that hung as low as the knees, and buttoned down the front, was stained "not with the variation of each soil" only, but of each element also; for, whilst on his back, it had literally passed through fire and water in the course of his wild and adventurous career: it was girded round the waist, and the belt sustained a pair of pistols, and a long dagger, each of rare value, and of the finest workmanship; for his weapons, were his pride. A dark russet cloak hung over one arm and fell down his back. He wore boots, heavy with high out-spreading tops, like those that may be seen in the pictures of the period. His steps were strides, and he never fixed his foot upon the earth but with that firm, bold stand, as if he would command it.

Such was the figure before whom Gertrude Copplestone now

stood trembling with fear, as she heard her uncle (to whom the circumstances in which they were placed seemed to have restored the most perfect self-possession) ask, in a high and indignant tone, "for what purpose he and the lady who was in his company had been stopped and detained in so lawless a manner?" This demand was answered by a wild and stormy laugh that burst from the leader, as he said, "Our laws are our own; and are nothing worse than those now current on English ground; for we use power when we gain it, and that for our own purposes. Who are you, and what are you? Speak, have you money? Yield, at a word; I never ask twice."

"I have a purse," said Gertrude, "take it, take all I have; here, too, is a jewel; trust me, it is of value. Take it, and if you have mercy let us go. Oh, if you have ever known better nurture and better fortunes than those which now seem to be your portion, I would beseech you to shew pity to this aged gentleman, and to me a hapless woman."

"You have disarmed me," said Sir Marmaduke, fearlessly; "you have overborne me by numbers, else would I not yield thus: I would shew you that, old as I am, I can yet struggle for my liberty, and die rather than yield it. For this lady, if you are men, if you have one feeling of humanity left among ye, harm her not, since she is self-devoted, and risked her life this night to preserve mine."

"Say, who are you?" cried the leader, in a voice of command: "Perhaps we are not the ruffians you seem to think us. There are worse men than ourselves in the world, as times go now in England, who yet bear a better fame. Once more, I command you speak, and palter not with us; for if you do, be it at your own peril—your name?"

Gertrude turned an expressive eye upon her uncle, as if to warn him not to betray himself; her heart was full of fearful forebodings. Nor was it without cause: amid the deep solitude of the forest, encompassed by dark rocks, the red glare of the torch (its light struggling with the surrounding shadows), shewed her every object of terror; yet even these were seen but imperfectly through the gloom that hung around. She gazed in silence on the wild and savage crew, in whose hard features and athletic forms there lurked the strength as well as the will to do deeds of violence and evil.

The stern, the sonorous, and deep voice of the leader, as he spoke the law of his mind in accents of command—his figure, which to her eye, in these terrible moments, seemed almost gigantic as it stood amid the darkness before her,—all, all alarmed her; and Gertrude, high-minded and resolute as she was in moral courage, felt at this dreadful crisis a sense of fear

so overwhelming, that she could not speak her feelings, except in the hurried glance of caution she now cast upon her uncle, to warn him not to sacrifice himself by giving up his name—a name that might prompt some one of the desperate men by whom he was surrounded to sell his life to his enemies, in order to obtain the proffered reward for his detection.

But it was one feature of Sir Marmaduke's character, perhaps of his infirmity, on all occasions, to glory in that name which had descended to him unsullied from his fathers, and which had now only become branded by his enemies for the loyalty of his own deeds. He, therefore, regardless of all danger, replied, without a moment's deliberation, "I am Marmaduke Elford, old and ruined, but still the same as when in my person I upheld the honour of an ancient house. You may have heard have such a man."

"I have," said the leader: "answer me. Are you that Sir Marmaduke Elford, who, when Sir Richard Grenville, that cruel and rapacious general, had doomed brave John Gubbins to die without law or justice, offered to redeem his life, and struggled to the last in the attempt to save him from a death that was no better than an act of murder? Are you that man?"

"The same," said Sir Marmaduke; "and though I could not prevail with Grenville to spare that unhappy and misled man, yet I did prevail with him to spare his youngest son, who had been taken prisoner at the same time with his father."

The leader on hearing this turned round to one who stood near him. "Here, boy," he cried, "here, Ralph Gubbins, kneel, and thank thy deliverer. It is Sir Marmaduke Elford who stands before thee. I thought I knew him at the first glance. Come forward, boy, and honour his grey hairs."

A youth, half naked, and of a half savage appearance, with matted hair, and wild, fierce black eyes, now advanced, held out his hand to Sir Marmaduke, and said, "Thanks, noble sir, but not for myself; may be had I been hanged when you saved me, I had only jumped the cart a year or so before my time; for a wise woman told me that father and I should both stretch hemp before we were ourselves stretched in a coffin; and father did so. But I do thank you," continued the savage boy, as he shook Sir Marmaduke's arm to the shoulder-blade in the hearty grasp he gave his hand,—"I do thank you that you did all man could do to get him off. I am not ungrateful; tell me your enemy, and I will shew you I am not, if a well-aimed shot can dispatch him."

"My enemies are not one alone, but many," said Sir Marmaduke; "and as you know so well who I am, you must also

know for whose cause I have fought, bled, and suffered, and for whose sake a price is now set upon my head. I fear not that you would take it to betray me."

"Not were we hungry as empty wolves," said the leader. "We live free, but not without honour. Our word passed to spare, or to take life, is never broken. It is I who say so; you may know me better before we part. Here, boys," he cried to his people, "we are all of one feeling, one faith. Nay, Sir Marmaduke, start not, we are not infidels. We have some religion amongst us. You here stand surrounded by a people known far and near, though branded and persecuted for it. We are the papist Gubbins—that hunted tribe, who have turned on our pursuers, and hitherto defied them. Know you this emblem?" He shewed a small gold cross that was suspended from his neck.

"It was this," continued the leader, "this that first made us a mark of prey to the fanatical puritans: Grenville, the Royalist, that debauched traitor to the king—for he was a traitor, for by an evil life he betrayed his cause—he came next upon us, and persecuted us, under pretext of our being papists, but in truth to possess himself of our wealth. But we still live free, though desperately, and so we will live till fate turns the tables."

"I know all your sad story," said Sir Marmaduke; "and though I pitied your misfortunes in the first instance, yet I cannot applaud your present mode of life. I would have bold-spirited men, like yourselves, employed in brave deeds, in the cause of King Charles."

"And for such a cause," said the leader, "we would spare nor toil nor blood. To Charles Stuart are we sworn. But who is yonder lady in your company? who is she?"

"My niece, the daughter of Sir John Copplestone. Do her no harm, for she is worthy of all honour."

"Then is the blood of her mother stronger in her heart than that of her father," said the captain. "She needs fear nothing from us. Why is she this night in your company?"

"To save me from the power of my enemies," said Sir Marmaduke, "she this night rode forth with me to meet the gallant Sir William Bastard, who promised to receive me, and give me shelter."

"Then are we well met, indeed," replied the outlaw; "for but now we have learnt by some of our stragglers, that in consequence of the bold part Sir William Bastard took against the troopers at Tamerton revel, he has this night had so fierce a struggle with some of them, who in revenge beset his house, that he was compelled to shut himself up, and to defend it

with all his people: had he stirred forth he would have been a dead man or a prisoner. We are friends to Sir William, for he is a gallant royalist: had our numbers been sufficient, we would have rescued him. But our men inhabit the glen of Lidford as their home, and we are but a wandering few, here waiting for the morning to return to them. It was impossible we could this night rally our forces in time to do him service, for most of us are out upon the moors."

Sir Marmaduke and Gertrude betrayed considerable emotion at hearing this account, and both spoke in a manner that shewed their anxiety for Sir William.

"Fear not for him," said the leader; "it is but a transient alarm. Sir William, I will warrant, can find a way to help himself, for his house is strong in its defences, and he is young and brave. Yet this fray will fix the eyes of the enemy upon him, and will render his dwelling no place of safety for you, Sir Marmaduke."

"I know not where to go," replied Sir Marmaduke; "I have been hunted like a deer from every covert of safety. Any shelter of rock or wood would be welcome to me, so I could there rest till the hour arrives to call on me for some better purpose than that of skulking like a coward to save my old life from danger."

"You will live, I hope, to end it nobly," said the leader; "and as such is your distress, I will preserve you. I know a hiding-place that would conceal you though Cromwell and all his dogs were at your heels—yet we must not seek it in darkness. Rest here till morning dawns, and I and some of my people will conduct you to it with all caution. And this boy, whose life you saved, shall there supply you with daily food, till you may leave your hiding-place for action. Will you go with me?"

"Most gladly," replied Sir Marmaduke; "and as we journey on I will instruct you where to find my son, so that you may warn him of my retreat."

"Agreed," cried the leader; "and for this lady—what can we do for her?"

"I must return homeward," said Gertrude, timidly; "if I am missed in the morning it will awaken suspicion. I came in the hope to save my uncle: I came hither as his guide, to meet Sir William Bastard; but I came in secret."

"I understand you," said the outlaw; "you came without the knowledge of Sir John Copplestone. Many a maiden deceives her father for a worse purpose. Lady, I cannot restore you this purse; but I pledge you my honour, and I have honour, though it squares not always with arbitrary laws, that

the contents of it shall buy necessaries for your uncle in his wants and his concealment. The jewel I return to you. My friend here" (he pointed to one of his followers as he spoke), "he shall see you safe back as far as the gates of Warleigh. You must ride forward with him on the instant, for I could not venture his safety, even to do you service, in the broad eye of day. Fear not; I will stake my life for it, you are safe."

The outlaw spoke this in a frank, open manner, and with as much kindness as one so rude could express in his discourse. Gertrude, under circumstances thus desperate, could do nothing but accept the proffered conduct, and she endeavoured to do so with a good grace. She thanked him warmly, though in a low and timid voice; and taking a kind farewell of her uncle, begged his blessing with tears in her eyes. He gave it as he folded her in his embrace. She prepared to depart.

"Stay, lady," said the leader; "I have yet a word more to say to you: I have bethought me of a service I may do to one who, if report speaks truth, is dear to you. There needs no blush, for it is no disgrace to love an honourable gentleman; we have intelligence of the world, though we live at war with it. We hear much by our friends, who busy themselves to learn what passes in the families hereabout. You know well Sir William Bastard?"

"She does," replied Sir Marmaduke; "and by her influence was Sir William this night to have given me shelter, could he have performed his promise."

"Sir William, I fear, will, after this night's brawl, never be left in peace," said the outlaw; "some plan, we have heard from good authority, for our spies never fail us—some deep laid plan is in agitation for his destruction, should he escape his present danger. I might, perhaps, could I know of it in time, do much to assist him and the royal cause." He looked on Gertrude as he spoke with a peculiar earnestness. "Lady, take this cross of gold" (he drew it from his bosom as he spoke); "it is my token; it was my father's. Keep it, and should your own safety, or that of Sir William Bastard, need the support of a powerful arm in any day of necessity, send but that, by a sure, a faithful, messenger to the glen of Lidford; bid him give the token into no other hand than that of Roger Rowle, and he swears to obey the summons; at any time, through any danger, he swears to do so, if you but name the place. It is from Roger Rowle himself you now receive the token."

At hearing this name, so formidable in its day (for Roger Rowle, as lawless as he was brave, was the Robin Hood of

Devon in the times of Charles the First), Gertrude could not suppress an exclamation of surprise as she took from his hand the cross, conscious how high a mark of favour it was when coming from such a quarter. Sir Marmaduke Elford remembered, however lawless might now be the life of this extraordinary person, he had once gallantly served as a volunteer in the king's cause; and that, during such service, had shewn, in the midst of many wild and desperate acts, a generosity and spirit of self-devotion, that made his after-life to be regretted, if not pitied, by all who honoured loyalty and courage.

Gertrude took the token with grateful acknowledgments, and declared, should necessity compel her, in these fearful times, to remember the promise she had just received from the giver, she would not hesitate to avail herself of it. Sir Marmaduke, ever honest and sincere, could not help expressing his regrets that one who had been so good a soldier in the royal cause should now pursue a manner of life contrary to the laws of civil order, and dangerous to himself.

Roger Rowle took no offence at the freedom of this remark: on the contrary, he laughed at hearing it, laughed in a manner so peculiar to himself, that it became a common saying in the country, to express anything that would frighten another, "It will scare you like the laugh of Roger Rowle." He exulted in his wild career, and never spoke of it but with that energy which was so striking a feature in the genius of this ill-directed but remarkable man—a genius that, had it never erred, would have made him great: but, as it was, served only as an example to mislead minds less strong, and, originally, less generous, than his own. Notwithstanding the ferocity of his appearance, there was something of grandeur in his air and manner, as, throwing abroad his arms, he pointed to the rocks under which he stood, and replied to Sir Marmaduke's remarks on himself and his followers:

"We are as the winds," said he; "own no authority, but rush wildly where we list. The woods are our tents. These rocks are our fortresses, they will outstand a siege, for old Time has not shaken them. The storm often makes our music, it will out-roll the drum; and the piping wind that screams in the ear, plays for us more shrilly than the fife."

Gertrude looked upon him with silent wonder, not unallied to awe, as she listened to the full intonations of his voice, whilst he expatiated on a theme in which he found delight.

He thus continued: "I have been a soldier; I am still such; for in what does my life differ from the lives of those who devote themselves to warfare and to conquest? We love battle as well as they do; our danger is no less, and we know

no time of peace. Day and night our skulls keep on their iron casings; our swords breed no rust, for our safety lies in action; and our lives are more honourable than those of state thieves and blood-spilling rebels, who make sport with a king's crown and build their fortunes on his ruin. We are free dwellers on the earth, though we have not a roof we can call our own to cover our heads in the time of need."

"A hard lot," said Sir Marmaduke, "one that has no respite from labour, and must be full of guilt; it can have no honour, no pleasures."

"No pleasures!" exclaimed Roger Rowle. "Oh, it has many; and honour too is ours, for we can do dangerous acts to serve a friend, as well as just ones to requite an enemy. And sweet is the bread we win through toil and danger. We can revel too after a hard day's labour. A lusty cup of brown ale makes glad our hearts, as we drink a health to the king. We follow the chase for our pastime, rouse up the antlered deer, and make him fly as the cloud does before the winds, as the echoes ring his knell in answer to the hunter's horn. These are our pleasures, and they are manly."

He now turned to Gertrude. "Lady, your guide waits your pleasure. I will assist you to mount your horse: fear not, for the youth is tried and faithful." Gertrude took a last farewell of her uncle; thanked the enthusiastic leader for his generosity, and wishing him better times, and a happier mode of life, departed in a state of mind so filled with wonder, anxiety, and surprise, that she scarcely seemed conscious of the road over which she passed on her return. Her way was not long, though rugged; for her conductor knew well every dell, path, or dingle in the country, and he now guided her to Warleigh by a shorter road than that by which she had quitted it. Old Anthony, observant of her commands, had left open the gates, and on arriving without them, the young outlaw took his leave: he returned on foot, for the horse he had ridden was the same on which Sir Marmaduke had escaped but a few hours before. Gertrude made the signal agreed upon to give notice to Anthony of her return: he opened the house door, held the bridle of her horse as she dismounted, and then led both animals back to their stable. His young mistress retired to her chamber, without her absence having been known to any living creature except Anthony, that old and faithful house steward.

CHAPTER XXXII.

And that huge pile (from some abyss
Of mortal power unquestionably sprung)
Whose hoary diadem of pendant rocks
Confines the shrill-voiced whirlwind round and round
Eddying within its vast circumference.
WORDSWORTH.

We now return to Sir Marmaduke Elford. The ruddy tints of early day were no sooner seen breaking in the east, touching with trembling light the summits of rock, wood, or cliff, than Roger Rowle, attended by Ralph Gubbins, and a few of his most trusted followers, prepared to set out with Sir Marmaduke to conduct him to his destined place of concealment. He had endeavoured during the intermediate space of time to take such rest and refreshment as the outlaws could afford him in their rude retreat; and he now rose with that air of thoughtfulness and melancholy which was habitual to him, except in moments when his mind became roused by a sense of danger, or the poignant stings of fancied remorse, for a calamity in which he had acted an unfortunate but an involuntary part.

Roger Rowle led on; and after passing over a wild country, by devious tracks, at length entered a road, at the bend of which was seen a view of Sheepstor, with its majestic and table summit. From the spot where the outlaw and Sir Marmaduke now stood, it appeared peering immediately above a bridge almost covered with ivy. The banks of the rivulet beneath were fringed with willows, and beyond the ivied arch was seen the tops of some lofty trees waving their branches over the roofs of the cottages that were visible between them.

The party advanced; and having passed with the utmost caution the outskirts of the little village, at length began to scale the mountainous acclivity. As they rose, so did the tor seem to rise with them, and to grow more and more imposing at every step. For some way up, grass was seen growing on its sides, though the earth beneath was nothing but a very slight covering from decayed vegetable matter on a substratum of granite. Beyond and about the summit (whence the tor shelves downward to its base in a bold and sweeping line of some hundred feet) all was totally bare and rugged, pre-

senting its granite front, and being alone diversified by wild, uncouth forms, here and there studded with the mosses and lichen that cling to its surface. The view commanded by this elevation was indeed magnificent.

In the valley below, the little tower of the village church (to which this eminence gave its name) formed a pleasing object as it was seen surrounded by the humble dwellings of the poor, affording as they did, that indication of social life, which served as a counterpoise to the solitary and somewhat desolate feelings these rugged rocks were calculated to inspire in the mind of the wanderer who strays amidst them. To the west an extensive horizon unfolded its blue and mellowing tints, tinged with the roseate hues of the morning light. The north presented a scene of grandeur now sublime in its effect. There arose tors of rock, bold, lofty, and imposing in their character, each wearing on its head a granite crown that looked golden and glittering as it caught the beams of the rising sun.

All around was wild and desolate: the party now made their way amid a labyrinth of rocks: enormous fragments lay tossed in every direction; above, below, were seen piled mass on mass, several in heaps with pointed tops like pyramids, others flat and square in their shapes, some on their sides, and many upright, presenting their acute angles in a manner that brought to mind a petrified sea of rising breakers in a storm. Of these there were thousands and thousands that extended all the way up to the very summit of the tor, which, flat or table formed, rushed downward precipitously at its farthest extremity towards the west.

Roger Rowle now waved his hand as he bade Sir Marmaduke follow him.

"Whither lead you?" he asked.

"Yonder," replied the outlaw, pointing to a small cleft or fissure in a rock, overhung by another, somewhat like a penthouse; it was seen peering amidst the masses of granite that still seemed to rise far above their heads.

"It is there you must lie hidden," continued Roger Rowle: "think you Cromwell's knaves will ever track you there, where the lark or the swallow makes his flight?"

"There!" exclaimed Sir Marmaduke, who paused with wonder at the sight of the fearful and dangerous retreat to which the outlaw was now leading him. "There! it is a place fit, indeed, for the birds of the air to build their nests in, but not a shelter for man: how can I find food or aid in such a spot?"

"O, well enough," said Roger Rowle; "I lived there for a

month;" and he added in a lower voice, as a grim smile passed over his swart feature, "I lived there scathless, when a whole troop were searching the country, far and near, to find me out, after I had avenged myself on the murderer of John Gubbins; and I did so without waiting till law and jury gave life for life. Ralph, the lad there, who can scale a rock like a goat or a monkey, he brought me food; and he shall now do the like for you. Come, Sir Marmaduke, never fear. Give me your hand; we will soon teach you to be a cragsman."

With extreme difficulty, by using the utmost caution of eye, foot, and hand, now springing from rock to rock, and now clinging firmly to one portion ere he advanced to another, Roger Rowle led on, assisting, encouraging, and guiding Sir Marmaduke, till they had so far gained the destined point as to stand on a flat slab of rock, forming a sort of platform, before that which presented the fissure or mouth of the narrow cell destined to be as a prison of security to Sir Marmaduke against his enemies.

"We are now," said the outlaw, "standing before the door of the pixies' house; for so is this cave called by the few shepherds to whom it was known, ere they were scared away from these heights by Grenville's men driving off their flocks. The cell is considered the haunt of invisible beings: you will hear them at work the moment you enter: but they are never seen. An old shepherd, who loved not Sir Richard Grenville nor his troopers, first pointed it out to me, and bade me, as I valued good luck or quiet nights, to drop a pin as an offering to the pixie who makes this cave her haunt, else would she torment me ever after.* Come, Sir Marmaduke, I will shew you the way. You must here play the part of a young aspirant with fortune, bend ere you rise—thus." So saying, the outlaw stooped his body, and not without difficulty passed through the narrow and low fissure which formed the mouth of the lonely cell.

Sir Marmaduke followed his example, and speedily found himself within a small cave composed of two rocks resting in a slanting position against another in a perpendicular station: the cavity was singularly regular, and had somewhat the form of a little hovel. A rock served for a seat, and the posture of sitting was the only one in which the inhabitant of such a narrow prison could find himself at ease. To stand upright was impossible, as it was only about five feet in height, and six in length; and both Sir Marmaduke and his guide were tall men. They were compelled to rest on the rocky seat which nature had provided for such accommodation.

* This superstitious offering to the pixies is still observed by the peasantry who venture on a visit to the lofty cave at Sheepstor.

"Do you hear those sounds?" said Roger Rowle. "Listen."

Sir Marmaduke did so, and distinctly heard a noise resembling that of the constant dripping of water into a brazen vessel.

"It is water falling, drop by drop," said the outlaw: "but whence it comes, or where it may be, is unknown; for no water runs amidst these rocks, and winter and summer, flood or drought, that sound never ceases nor varies: it is ever the same."* Yet I will warrant, be this cell haunted by pixie or fiend, they harm you not, and will prove better company than Fairfax or Cromwell will find for you in Lidford Castle, or in the old iron-bound dungeons of Rougemont at Exeter. Here I leave you for awhile."

"I shall see you again?" said Elford.

"O yes," continued Roger Rowle, "and here is somewhat for you that you will find necessary." He drew forth a small wallet from under his cloak as he spoke. "It is your ammunition, to keep hunger and thirst from rebelling, till I can send in a fresh supply for your little garrison. Ralph shall bring you more, and all things necessary for your comfort; and here is your bandog for you: it will make others howl louder than its own bark, for it bites truly and sharply. Take the pistol, and here is charge of powder and lead more than sufficient. Keep watch, and use your arms, if needs must, but not without great necessity, lest it give the alarm. Is there aught else I can do for you? Say the word, and if a friend can serve you, Roger Rowle lacks not the will."

"You will remember," said Sir Marmaduke, "where I told you this morning my son might be heard of, so as to acquaint him with the place of my retreat. Tell him, when the hour comes for action, I am ready for it. Bid him not fail to seek me here in person, that I may be assured of the summons."

"I will do so," replied the outlaw; "and if my people can aid your enterprise, you may command Roger Rowle and his wild boys of the glen. Farewell, Sir Marmaduke, the sun is up, and suits not those who walk most by nights: I must away, for I have much to do ere he circles to the west. Farewell, and fear not, for you will find us faithful."

So saying, the outlaw quitted the lonely and narrow cave, leaving Elford in safety from his enemies, but in a solitude so desolately miserable, that it seemed more calculated to foster that unhappy melancholy to which his mind was so often a prey, than to rouse up or sustain his better spirit, for the

* There can be no doubt this circumstance occasioned the cave to be considered the haunt of invisible beings; hence is it called by the country people the pixies' house. The pixies are a race of fairies, whose origin may be traced to the Saxon times.

enterprise in which he hoped to play so prominent a part. In this solitude we must for the present leave him, whilst we say a few words respecting Roger Rowle and his gang, by whom he had been so unexpectedly befriended in his hour of need.* This, however, demands another chapter.

* Tradition says, that the royalist, Elford, who was so long concealed in the pixies' house at Sheepstor, to avoid the pursuit of Cromwell's emissaries, had a talent for the art of design; and that whilst so hidden, he amused himself by painting the walls of his narrow cell. A gentleman who visited the spot more than half a century ago, and gave some account of it, averred that in his time these paintings were "very fresh:" and that the country people had many superstitious notions about the little cave. The writer of these pages, a few months since, also attempted to visit its interior, but found the danger, as well as the difficulty, so great, that she was compelled to be content with viewing the mouth of the cave from a point of rock about thirty or forty feet below the entrance. She has, therefore, in the description given above, availed herself of an account of it written by her husband, after he had visited the solitary cavern, nearly twenty years ago. No trace of the paintings then remained.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

One sole desire, one passion now remains,
To keep life's fever still within his veins—
Vengeance! dire vengeance on the wretch who cast
O'er him and all he loved that ruinous blast;
For this he still lives on, careless of all
The wreaths that glory on his path let fall;
For this alone exists—like lightning fire,
To speed one bolt of vengeance, and expire!

MOORE.

THOUGH the followers of Roger Rowle, at the time we introduce them to the reader, assuredly deserved no other name than that of banditti, yet, in the first instance, they were not altogether unworthy of pity—since injustice, cruelty, and persecution, had driven them into distress; and afterwards rendered desperate by the want of that mercy which, if timely shewn, might have reclaimed them, they became confirmed in their errors, till, totally hardened by repeated acts of violence and aggression, they were both hunted and dreaded by all the country around.

To form a just idea of the sort of persecution under which these men had suffered, it becomes necessary we should here say a few words concerning the person whose abuse of the powers vested in his hands by the Royalists had, in the first instance, driven them to despair. This person was General Sir Richard Grenville; a character not more known for his boldness in action, than for his carelessness in securing by a prudent conduct any advantages he might have gained for the king by his successes in the field.

The courage and virtues of his illustrious brother, Sir Bevil Grenville (who was killed at Landsdown fight), for awhile caused Sir Richard's misconduct to be viewed with more than ordinary indulgence, till, at length, it was found impossible to pass over his frequent abuses of it without chastisement as well as reprehension.

It was well known that he stocked his own grounds with such cattle as he drove off the lands of the disaffected; and would frequently send out illegal and vexatious warrants to seize persons, wholly innocent, as suspected rebels, having, in doing so, an eye to their property and estates. Or if any one failed in his attendance at the *posse comitatus* (which, whilst

sheriff of Devon, he frequently summoned for no purpose but that of exacting the penalty of defaulters), he would send a party of troopers to drive their cattle, and seize upon their goods or persons, as it might best suit his purpose. And if these luckless wights chanced to be farmers of substance, they thought themselves well off by being suffered to give up their cattle only, as a ransom for their own persons.

One great scene of Grenville's cruelty gave rise to a proverb that to this day is current in the west. It was his common practice whilst he was governor of Lidford castle, to commit many honest men of property to the Castle dungeons, on the slightest cause of suspicion, and often for no cause at all, and there would he suffer them to lie in misery till they redeemed their persons with their gold; whence comes the saying, on any arbitrary or unjust procedure, it is 'Lidford law.' Browne, the author of Britannia's Pastorals, happening to visit his friend, Colonel Halls, who was a prisoner of war under Sir Richard Grenville's committal to Lidford Castle, about the year 1644, thus wrote:—

I oft have heard of Lidford law,
How in the man they hang and draw,
And sit in judgment after.
At first I wonder'd at it much;
But since I find the matter such,
As it deserves no laughter.

Sir Richard's men also were so insolent and brutal in their conduct, that many of the yeomanry and peasants joined the parliament party, from the fear of falling into the power of these troopers, who committed every sort of outrage in the king's name, and with the full sanction of their base and tyrannical commander.

We now return to the Gubbins's. One of their family had been a dealer in cattle, and his trade was so considerable, that, during some years of industry, he had amassed a fortune sufficient to enable him not only to provide for his own offspring (who were in number seven sons and three daughters), but also to assist his poor kindred to the third and fourth degree, so that, like a Scotch clan, the Gubbins's of Devon were a combined and powerful family amongst the yeomanry of the county. They were all, to a man, devoted to the cause of King Charles, and some of them had served him in more than one action.

During a short interval of truce, whilst Sir Richard Grenville and his army were spending their time in idleness, and disgracing the royal cause, in the manner before noticed, one of his officers deceived and inveighled the eldest daughter of John Gubbins, a beautiful girl seventeen years old. Incensed

at the outrage, with all the honest indignation of a father, John Gubbins, after vainly endeavouring to discover where she was concealed by her seducer, appealed to the General for redress. Far from awarding it, the officer who had stolen the girl received support and countenance from the General, and a new act of cruelty was practised on the unhappy complainant; for the seducer whispered in the ear of an official that Gubbins was a papist, and that on such ground, as well as on that of his having neglected to send his sons to attend the last muster of the *posse comitatus*, he might bring a charge against him, and even lay hold of him, as he was known to be a wealthy yeoman, and very able to pay a large ransom for his liberty.

This hint sufficed: the Gubbinses were imprisoned in Lidford Castle, and the betrayer triumphed in his crime; and thus commenced a dispute which, like some act of oppression under the barons of old, led the way to a prolonged and dangerous warfare, in which even blood was shed on each side, by the innocent as well as the guilty, in the quarrel.

The outrage committed on John Gubbins roused the spirit of his tribe, for so might his numerous kindred be called; and Roger Rowle, a young man of a wild life but of great talents, who had acted as a volunteer for the King's cause, determined to avenge him. Roger had been a rejected, and was still a passionate, admirer of Gubbins's beautiful daughter; and thinking, perhaps, his courage would act on her mind hereafter, and induce her to receive him, he projected, and actually executed, the most daring scheme for her father's deliverance from bondage.

Roger Rowle was bold, enterprising, and active; and having so managed matters that the whole tribe of the Gubbinses consented to be led by him on a concerted plan and day (when it was known Sir Richard would be absent, and Lidford Castle but thinly manned), these hardy yeomen of Devon actually took the castle by surprise, delivered the Gubbinses, father and sons, and freed all the prisoners who would consent to join with them. After this wild adventure, they dared not return immediately to their homes, but became a strongly armed band, wandering about the country, and living sometimes near Brentor, at others amid the rocks of Dartmoor, and frequently, when pressed by an enemy, within the glen of Lidford. Not a cave, not a forest, not a rock, nor a nook of concealment, but it became to them a place of occasional refuge or shelter; and though the official instantly sequestered whatever little property or cattle they had left behind them in their flight, nevertheless so active were these men, that

for a long time they set at defiance all his attempts to secure them.

At last John Gubbins the elder was taken; when, to consummate the injuries by which he had suffered, the miserable father was hanged on a summary judgment by command of that very officer who had seduced his daughter; and, if report spoke truth, within sight of the very house in which she was still kept as a prisoner by her base paramour. This last act completed the ruin and confirmed the wild and lawless life of the tribe; for Roger Rowle, who was also a papist, swore by the blessed Virgin of heaven that he would never yield nor desist from his revenge, till it became as signal as the crimes of his enemies.

In obedience to this vow, he once more took the lead; the Gubbinses followed him, one and all, and their first act was to waylay the seducer of the daughter, the murderer of the father, and to shoot him dead upon the spot. A large reward was now offered for the apprehension of Roger Rowle, or of any of his gang; but it was unavailing: no man betrayed him; and he was often active in assisting the distressed and fugitive Royalists in these dangerous wars. For some time Roger and his people lived within the bounds of his wild vow, seeking revenge more than plunder; but all their present means gone, and no mercy being held out to them would they surrender, they were compelled by stern necessity to have recourse to robbery and plunder, and, in fact, to become no better than an organized banditti under the command of Captain Rowle; his genius having procured for him the honour of being chosen their leader.

His hardihood, his success, the devotion of his people to his service, soon rendered him as terrible in the glen of Lidford, or on the wilds of Dartmoor, as ever Robin Hood and his bands might have been in the forest of Sherwood at the time when Merry England was half peopled by thieves. An old writer, who speaks of the Gubbinses in a note on Camden, calls them "a rude tribe, a very Scythian people;" and Browne the poet has given celebrity to Roger Rowle in the following couplets:—

And near hereto 's the Gubbins' cave,
A people that no knowledge have
Of law, of God, or man;
Who've lawless lived, of manners rude,
All savage in a den.

By whom, if any pass that way,
He dares not the least time to stay,
For presently they howl;
Upon which signal they do muster
Their naked forces in a cluster,
Led forth by Roger Rowle.

The cave alluded to above was in the glen of Lidford, the usual haunt of the Gubbinses; but they often straggled from home, and made all wild retreats their own, wherever they could hope to find security, or a convenient spot to carry on the trade of plunder and rapine. Sometimes, if their enemies were numerous, they fled before a hot pursuit, though far more frequently would they face about and meet it; for they were generally victorious, their perfect acquaintance with the country giving them those advantages of fighting under cover of an ambush of trees or of rocks, a mode of warfare that could not so readily be practised by their opponents.

Such were the people into whose hands fortune had now thrown Sir Marmaduke Elford: he had Roger Rowle's word for his safety, and it was one of the striking characteristics of that leader never to break his word. Indeed, he valued himself much both upon his honour and his religion, though the latter consisted in nothing more than the observance of a few outward ceremonies enjoined by the church of Rome, in which he had been educated with more care than his present condition of life would induce most men to suspect. He had likewise been a traveller, and was not altogether unacquainted with the customs and habits of polished society, though he had taken pains to adopt his manners to those of his rude associates, who now looked up to him with the reverence and obedience due to a lawful and absolute prince.

Such was Roger Rowle; and thus much concerning this "very Scythian people" have we found it necessary to give for the information of our readers, who, we trust, have not been uninterested in the extraordinary fortunes of such a singular tribe. The writer of these pages has been assured that within the last century several of their descendants (who still bore their uncouth name, the Gubbinses) lived near Brentor, and retained the rude and even savage character of their ancestors. For the present we must leave them, and turn to another and very different subject connected with our narrative.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

——— Shall the figure of God's majesty,
His captain, steward, deputy elect,
Anointed, crown'd, and planted many years,
Be judged by subjects and inferior breath?
——— Never alone
Did the King sigh, but with a general groan.
SHAKSPERE.

THE scene of our narrative now shifts to Warleigh, where, about two or three weeks after the events had occurred which formed the subject of our last chapters, Sir John Copplestone was one day seated in his own private apartment, busied over papers, and wearing in his countenance an expression of uneasiness and deep thought more than was usual with him.

His mind was at this hour exceedingly disturbed, for he was playing a deep game in the busy events of the time, and was far advanced in the mazes of plot, enterprise, and intrigue. These designs he felt, if executed with success, would make him great beyond all the former hopes of his wily ambition; but if they failed, he was likely to sink for ever in his worldly fortunes. In this frame of mind he heard with considerable perturbation that a person waited in the hall to see him, who came charged with letters he was to deliver into no hands but his own. Sir John ordered that he should be instantly admitted; and soon after the honest and trusted Cornet Davy walked into the room.

Sir John received him with cold civility, and bade him be seated; but no sooner had the servant who guided him thither retired, than Copplestone suddenly rose up, locked the door, peeped behind the arras, and having seen that all was safe, and that none but himself and the Cornet occupied the chamber, he exclaimed, in a tone of eagerness: "Thou hast brought me letters—I guess from whom; the good knight, thy worthy master, has despatched them to me: he is by this time in the Isle of Wight?"

"No, he is not," said Cornet Davy; "he is in Somersetshire, and goes for Salisbury."

"Not in the Isle of Wight! goes for Salisbury! what may this mean?" exclaimed Copplestone, as a lurking feeling of suspicion was, in a moment, roused into action by hearing a

thing so contrary to his expectations. "I had thought that matter was arranged between us without fear of revocation, and that nothing would have stayed Sir Hugh at such a time."

"What may have produced this change in his road, I know not," said the Cornet; "but I can answer for it, there is no change in his purpose. There is his letter for you, Sir John: I have already been the bearer of one to Sir Piers Edgcumbe; for only last night the packet arrived from my master: I was charged to deliver every letter myself, as he would trust no other hand. Yours, no doubt, will tell all particulars; but I know all the business, since my good master wrote also to me with the cipher that is between us."

"And what said he?" inquired Sir John, as he broke the seal of his own letter; "your news, no doubt, tallies with mine. Thou art an honest, trusted fellow, and shall be well rewarded, for thou deservest all that can be done for thee hereafter. Sit thee down; I will read these the while."

Cornet Davy took his seat, as Sir John Copplestone read with the most riveted attention the letter put into his hands from Sir Hugh Piper. After doing so, he was silent for a moment, and then, fixing his dark eye on the Cornet, exclaimed in a tone of exultation, "Thy news is great, indeed! if this prospers England's hope shall once more, like the Phœnix of old, rise, bright and glorious, from its ashes. All is prepared?"

"It is," replied Cornet Davy; "and may God bring it to a happy issue!"

"It cannot fail, I think it cannot fail," said Copplestone. "Charles Stuart knows of our purpose—that his friends watch for the hour of his deliverance, even as Moses watched for that which should lead forth the Israelites from bondage. Are all the gentlemen, our fast friends and allies, prepared and warned for this great enterprise? its final issue will rest on their fidelity."

"Sir Piers Edgcumbe and Sir William Bastard will not fail to warn them," said the Cornet.

"And Burley," said Copplestone; "Burley, at the time here stated in this letter, rises in the Isle of Wight on the sudden, to free Charles from his prison. He flies to the west: an armed force in Cornwall and Devon, now secretly, but surely, preparing to receive him, unite at a given signal; the governor of Plymouth Castle promises to yield that strong fortress to the King. Exeter will also yield; and Charles, appearing on the sudden, plants his standard once more in the west. His presence will rouse all hearts in generous emulation to support his cause. The fire will spread; and by our example Corn-

wall and Devon shall become as beacon-lights to England's loyalty."

"So it is hoped," said Cornet Davy: "the King's escape to France is impossible, for there is not a pinnace, not a cock-boat, nor a fisher's bark, if but put off towards the French coast, is chased and searched. The King must escape by Southampton: all is ready for him. Burley's plan is surely laid; it seems impossible that it should fail: the day, the very hour is named for delivering the King from Carisbrook Castle, and no delay will take place, so well is all arranged."

"It is," replied Copplestone; "and on the twentieth of June, so I learn from this letter, all the gentlemen who take the lead in this enterprise meet in Warleigh Hall, to determine on the day of open revolt from those tyrannical powers who now chasten England with the iron scourge of rebellion and of wrath."

"It is so agreed," said the Cornet: "on the twentieth of June they will meet, and here, since your house, Sir John, is their only secure place for such a meeting, on account of your standing unsuspected by the parliament. You once belonged to that party?"

"I did," answered Copplestone; "but I was then in the gall of bitterness, in the darkness of Egypt; a poor misguided Israelite in the house of bondage. I had never joined them could I have foreseen to what extremities they would drive on matters with the King, when he so freely yielded to all their just grievances. Could I but have dreamed that they would lay violent hands upon him, and imprison their anointed king, I had died rather than have taken part with such villany; but I repent me, as did Ahasuerus when he commanded the death of all the Jews; and I, like him, who helped an evil work, will now join, heart and hand, to seek deliverance from it. No man, I think, doubts my purpose of doing good service to Charles Stuart."

"Had you given only fair words, Sir John," said Cornet Davy, "all men would have doubted it; but your fair deeds have been your warrant. The large sums you have advanced to buy arms and raise men are worth a thousand professions. No royalist gentleman doubts you, who have not spared your purse in the King's cause."

"Nor my prayers either," said Copplestone, "since to give money alone were a deed of little worth, unless, like Cornelius, the prayers brought a blessing on the gift. I am not the first man, it should be remembered, who, on seeing to what lengths the parliament drove matters, has taken part with the oppressed king. General Chudleigh went farther than ever I did with

them, for he fought under the Earl of Stamford at Stratton Heights; yet how soon after did he return to his allegiance, and no man did better service to the crown. Sir William Waller had never been routed at Roundway Down, but for his return to the royal cause. Rupert and Maurice, those twin stars of royalty, both honoured him; and Sir Ralph Hopton, who was never prone to praise doubtful men, or to welcome back a halting royalist, yet even he said that Charles had in Chudleigh recovered one of the bravest and best soldiers that ever won a field. Did I need farther example, I might cite the Earls of Bedford, of Holland, and of Clare, who all returned, with true allegiance, to the King at Oxford."

"Yes," said Cornet Davy, in his accustomed blunt manner; "but be it also remembered, Sir John, that they came back to his majesty when the parliament had the worst of it, after the siege of Bristol; when that city was bought at a price, to my thinking beyond its worth—for Slanning and Trevannion, those noble western gentlemen, fell before its walls. After Bristol's surrender, when the King's affairs looked bright, like a summer sky after a storm, then came back those same wheedling lords and earls, and made legs at Oxford to the King, fearing lest their heads might bow, instead of their knees, on a block on Tower Hill. But to speak my mind to you, Sir John Copplestone, I should place no more reliance on your return to the good cause, than I would on a Jew broker's bond, or on an usurer's table of interest, if you had not given something better, by way of assurance, than the example of those same lords."

"They were men of note and honour," said Copplestone.

"Ay," cried Davy, "but inconstant as the wind; for every one of them turned back again to the parliament after Newbury fight, where Sunderland, Carnarvon, and the great Falkland bit the dust, leaving all England to mourn for them in tears of blood. I cannot think of it even now without a feeling about my heart, that would almost make an old rough soldier, like myself, play the woman."

"They were as pearls of honour, indeed, in the king's crown," said Copplestone; "and as for those same changeling lords, they came back again to Charles, as spring does to the earth, to bask in the warm beams of the returning sun, for the King's fortunes then began to smile upon him. But I would bid you bear in mind, that I have returned to the King in his adversity; and that whilst he, though a crowned prince of three great kingdoms, lies a prisoner, poor, heart-broken, and oppressed, I have sought him sorrowing, and have not spared to risk life, fortune, all I have, to serve him; and

without I had done this, where would those gallant leaders of the west have found the means to encourage or to organise their plan?"

"Sir John Copplestone," said the Cornet, as he held out his hand, his eyes glistening with the warmth of his own feelings as he spoke—"Sir John, you have declared the truth; you have done all you say, and I honour you for it. You have been the great treasurer to the King's cause; and I hope every item of the running account between you may be fairly noted, and the sum total have honourable acquittance, so soon as his majesty shall once more enjoy the privilege of raising money without asking every penny of a grudging parliament, like a poor bankrupt who stands before his commission. I am at your command to bear any letters or messages; for as long as I have breath and being, I hold neither so much my own, but that they should both be spent in the service of the King and my master, Sir Hugh Piper, as noble-hearted a gentleman as ever took rebel by the beard. And if Burley should but succeed in his plan, who knows but that on the twentieth day of June, the royal bird having slipt the cage, we may——"

"On that day," said Copplestone, interrupting him, "welcome Charles the First, king of England, to Warleigh's ancient halls! He shall be right welcome."

"It is a glorious hope," said the Cornet; "but that I have so much to do to further it, I would pray day and night that no cross or let may start up from the devil to disappoint such a royal plan of enterprise. It will confer such honour on our old county of Devon as she never dreamed of—to become the king's deliverer! the land that rescues, that shelters him from a prison, whilst her best and her bravest rise, to a man, in his cause! Thank heaven there's no Sir Richard Grenville now to step in and spoil all, by getting drunk and wasting men and means in night brawls and private quarrels. We shall all smile, like our own green hills, when 'tis over, and there shall be no tears but what the clouds, here, let fall so plentifully, and even they will be for joy."

"And to finish thy fanciful phrase," said Sir John Copplestone, "I will add that our own evergreen laurels and myrtles shall be worn in our men's bonnets as symbols of victory and peace. Will that content thee?"

"O most rarely!" cried the zealous Cornet: "I would have none sorrow but the rascally Roundheads: and those cursed old gaols and castles, and foul-aired, crammed prison-ships, where so many gallant royalists now lie like dogs and slaves, why it were meet that the puritans, and the army agitators, took their turn in them, to try how they liked the

fare they had so long provided for others. And then we shall have bishops again, and once more say our prayers like sober men, as some worthy silver-haired divine reads the liturgy, and not go about, as of late, to talk to the Almighty in the language of raving bedlamites and fanatics, who tell him the news from their very pulpits, as if he could not find it out without their commentary. We will have again all the good old times."

"And that we may," said Sir John Copplestone, "I would counsel thee not lose a moment in warning all whom it may concern of the stated day and hour of our meeting. Thou hast other letters that must be speedily delivered, no doubt of it."

"I have one for Sir William Bastard," replied the Cornet. "Sir William has had a quarrel with some of Butler's men—a quarrel at his very doors, when powder and lead were exchanged, by way of compliment, between them."

"It was rash, most rash and ill-advised," said Copplestone: "to brawl in private quarrels at such a crisis is mere madness. The affray began, as I heard, about some offence given by Sir William to the parliament troopers, for having made free with his cattle. I have effected a present peace for him; else might this foolish brawl have marred all our hopes. Sir William will meet the gentlemen at Warleigh on the twentieth of June?"

"No doubt," said the Cornet; "for he is like a good, trusty piece that never hangs fire in a moment of need. Sir John Copplestone, I take my leave; and when we next meet, I trust it will be to hail the King's liberation from prison."

"I hope as much," said Copplestone: "commend me to Sir Piers, and to thy worthy master; fare ye well."

The Cornet departed full of high hopes and anxious desires for the success of that cause which he was ready to support at the risk of his own life; and of what was yet dearer to him, the life of his master.

No sooner was Cornet Davy gone than Sir John Copplestone, who had risen on his quitting the apartment, paced up and down it with slow and measured steps. His arms were crossed before him, his head inclined downward, his eye fixed on vacancy, whilst he held converse with his own dark thoughts; and at intervals, so wrapt was he in these musings, a few broken sentences escaped his lips. "It is even so—I think it cannot fail. Hand and seal is given upon it—wherefore then fear? wherefore doubt? It must be so—the plan is obvious, well laid; the men trusted and sure men—why should it fail? it is a foolish fear. The practised gamester hesitates not to stake his all on a high cast, when he knows his adversary

sees not the loaded dice—and those who have so long practised on others must now take their risk. Our play is sure and good: no shuffle-board was ever freer of castings or rubs than the way we have smoothed for fortune—it is but to pass over the first line, and the go is the game. It is, it must be so. Yet were it not well to see how the fates look upon me? hitherto they have been propitious; I may yet learn something. That fiend in woman's form has power and knowledge in her dark mystery that would make a very saint consult her, though 'twere against his conscience. I must be cautious how I deal with her: money she shall have; yet sparingly, not enough to make her cease to serve me: she must be led on in the hope to gain more. Yes, it shall be so: she awaits me, I will see her; once more I will see, and know how this great cast will turn—be it for good or evil."

Sir John Copplestone immediately summoned a serving-man into his presence, and bade him "send in the good woman," as he was pleased to call his creature, "who had skill in medicinal herbs and simples for healing the sick, since he (Sir John) would have some discourse with her on such matters."

The servant went to do his office, not at all surprised by the command he had received, as he well knew his master held the person in question in considerable estimation on account of her supposed medicinal skill. At the time of our tale many a witch and many a trafficker in the stars cloaked her more dangerous as well as more lucrative employment under such a disguise, which served the double purpose of screening the credulity of her employers and her own imposture from detection.

CHAPTER XXXV.

The worm of consience still begnaw thy soul!
Thy friends suspect for traitors while thou livest,
And take deep traitors for thy dearest friends!
No sleep close up that deadly eye of thine,
Unless it be while some tormenting dream
Affrights thee with a hell of ugly devils!
Thou elvish-mark'd, abortive, rooting hog!

SHAKSPERE.

COPPLESTONE'S command was followed by the appearance of Dame Gee: she walked boldly into the room, but greeted her ancient patron with respect as she asked his pleasure. The door was secured before he vouchsafed an answer. Habit had rendered this caution so familiar to him (since most of Sir John's conferences were of a nature to require secresy), that it was a rare matter for Copplestone to give audience to any person with an open door.

"I would require further help from your art, mother," said Sir John; "though, by late chances, my faith in your predictions is much shaken. He is returned to England notwithstanding I sent him abroad at the time you named as being most suited to my hopes in the affair of his absence. Yet he is come back again: again is he risen up, like an adder that seemed crushed under foot, once more to lie in my path, watching but to sting me. You dealt darkly and falsely in that matter."

"I did not," said Dame Gee, in a manner that spoke no fear; "I could give you proof I did not. Did I not tell you that you had best look to yourself, and leave the boy to his own fortunes? I gave you no assurance that he would not return: I only told you that if you did send him to a far country, the time I named was the best for your purpose, and so it was; for I know you wished that he should never more return."

"Ha!" exclaimed Copplestone, "dare you say this, and to my face? it is false, foully false. I told you the lad grew insolent as he grew nearer to manhood and independence. I had treated him as a father, offered him my own daughter, who was fit to share an earl's estate, so young and fair is she; and he, the ingrate, the viper! he put scorn on my great offer,

dishonoured her by refusal, and held cheap my proffered bounty. This were cause enough, had I no other, to make me wish him removed from my sight: I sent him to do himself service, where his father left him lands, in Barbadoes; I had redeemed those lands from the hard hands of rapacious creditors; I did him no wrong in sending him where fortune grows by industry, with the master's eye to watch for its increase."

"You sent him, Sir John," said Dame Gee, "but you sent him not alone; one bore him company more as his keeper than as his servant. But for one chance, and that you know well, he would have detained him there till the pestilent fever or the raging heats of that fiery climate did their work on a sickly boy. Have I not spoken truth?"

Copplestone changed colour at hearing this; but resolved that the woman whom he feared as well as trusted, in her presumed commerce with fortune and the stars, should not see how much he was moved by her words, he checked all outward signs of feeling their import, and said, with gloomy pride: "How know you aught of that man? he died soon after he was saved from a watery grave, and, as I have learnt, spoke to no one before death, except to the boy he had followed on service, and with whom he suffered shipwreck. You would practise on me; I see you would," continued Copplestone, fiercely; "but beware, beware, woman, palter not with me."

"I speak truth," said Dame Gee, "though, may be, I speak it darkly."

"Beware," exclaimed Copplestone; "for even heathens knew how to deal with juggling magicians, and gave them death in requital for false dealing with their masters. Trust not my patience too far; and know that though men like myself, who hold their courses in deep waters, would fathom their depths for safety ere they venture too far upon them, yet though they respect the art which helps them to steer far from rocks and shoals, they hold in little reverence those who practise it. So do I hold thy art and thee: I buy its uses as I would a weapon—a needful thing, yet one not to be turned against myself. Remember, therefore, who thou art; for this day thou hast forgotten thyself strangely, and hast spoken most foully and falsely to me."

"I have done neither," said Dame Gee: "if you bid me search into your fortunes, you must take them as I find them, evil or good; they are not of my choosing. I have told you many things by arts that you know are forbidden—arts dangerous to me, and nothing safe to you. By them I have

learnt much that is darkly written in your horoscope; and as a proof that I have learnt these things by no juggle, by means no human power could suggest, mark what I now tell thee, and tremble. Thy destiny is strangely connected with the contents of yonder cabinet."

As she spoke, Dame Gee pointed with her finger to the red velvet cabinet which stood in the apartment. Copplestone, in spite of all his self-control, started like the deer when suddenly roused from his covert: terror possessed his soul, shook every nerve in his stubborn frame, as the ashy whiteness of death passed over his countenance, in whose expression there was a livid witness of guilt allied to fear.

"Thou hast not learnt it!" he said in a low, perturbed voice, as he seemed to draw his breath with difficulty to utter even these few words. "Dost thou know more?"

"Nothing more," replied Dame Gee, calmly. "I have told all I know. The stars speak not like us mortals in plain and direct terms: they do but parcel out the shadows of things to come; and danger and safety may be learnt but in part by the aspect of their influences. Thus when the house of life is found opposed by——"

"Cease thy terms of art," said Copplestone: "they are as little understood by me as would be the language of Chaldea, in which this fell science was first taught by man. I know it is great and fearful. Give me its saving power; teach me to walk by it so as to guide my steps to fortune, and I will do for thee hereafter some true benefit. Daniel, the wise prophet of old, was rewarded for the interpretations he made as he stood before the king. He was clothed in scarlet, and wore a chain of gold about his neck, and he was mighty in his place and in his works. The revealer of hidden things must never want reward; nor shalt thou: yet the youth returned alive!"

"He did," said Dame Gee, "and I would counsel you to leave him to his fortunes. Deal not with him; for he is under a higher hand than thine. He came hither through the tumult and strife of many waters. Storms and winds came from their secret regions to make the goodly bark that floated him their prey; and every mountain wave foamed in anger as it chased its victim. The deep sea opened wide a yawning gulf, and it was to that tempest-driven bark a grave: the ocean closed upon it, the wild winds howled its dirge, scarcely a living thing was left to tell the tale, yet even then he escaped—he still lives; some power, stronger than stormy winds or beating tempests, stronger than thy malice, guarded him. Forbear, then; I give thee warning; forbear

to harm him; or the fate thou wouldst measure out for him may be thine own."

Copplestone looked surprised, as with an elevation of voice and language, well practised by the sorceress in her dealings with those she would awe or direct, she assumed an air and manner of more dignity than on a casual glance could have been expected from one of her person and degree. But Dame Gee was a consummate actress; and if deceit could have passed undetected with the master whom she served, her part at times was so admirably played, that she might have cheated the father of lies himself with her hypocrisy. Yet in justice to her we must say that she really felt an interest for Radcliffe. It is true that she had not cared to spare him in a matter where she hoped to gain something by giving Reginald Elford intelligence of the interview she had witnessed between Amias and Agnes; yet she had known Radcliffe from a boy, and really liked him much better than her patron and dupe, Sir John Copplestone; for though Sir John employed her, he did it in a sullen and offensive manner, and doled out his rewards with a cunning and a sparing hand, ever keeping her in small pay, in order to keep her humble and entirely dependent on himself. Dame Gee saw in what manner she was treated, and artfully requited it, so that she at once feared, hated, and beguiled Copplestone, to a degree that, with all his cunning, he had neither suspected nor deemed to be within the compass of probability. Yet Sir John was struck with the energetic manner in which she now warned him to beware how he dealt with Radcliffe; and could not forbear a remark, prompted by his own suspicious temper, that she must have some extraordinary cause to feel any kindness for this youth.

"I have none," replied Dame Gee, who was careful not to let Copplestone know she cared more for his godson than for himself. "The youth has never offended me," she added; "and of late years I have seen little of him. What I tell you is for your own sake, Sir John, more than for his, when you ask me counsel how you ought to deal with him."

"Let it pass," said Copplestone. "There is another point on which I would question you. Have you seen Coleman? Has he done my bidding respecting the royalist gentlemen he was about to inform against, for keeping close certain properties uncompounded for with the committee of sequestration? Did my orders arrive in time to save them? Not a royalist must now be touched in such matters."

"He has forborne them," said Dame Gee; "your orders arrived in season, for the Captain had the toils ready, and laid to snare them."

"It is well," said Copplestone; "I am glad they were spared."

"You are grown strangely kind to Royalists and Cavaliers, Sir John," said Dame Gee.

"It matters not to you, woman," replied Copplestone: "Coleman had learnt this affair respecting the concealed property by some blundering account from your son—not the idiot son—his brother it is I mean; else you were not the person to be employed in such matters. But I now tell you to hold back the lad; let him tell no tales against Royalists, for they will not be encouraged at this time, whatever might formerly have happened. Another word, and I have done with you. Look that you bring me intelligence how it may fare with an enterprise I have much at heart, that I hope to accomplish on the twentieth day of June. I would know if it is likely to prosper. Spare no labour; search the hidden book of fate, and tell me if that page be written in characters of darkness or of light! Here is a gold piece for thee. Be secret, silent, and you shall want no reward."

"I look to receive some part of it now," said Dame Gee, pocketing the gold piece.

"Have I not bestowed it?" exclaimed Copplestone. "Your guerdon is pure gold; and would you still cry, Give?"

"I look for a better reward," said Dame Gee; "a service that you have the power to do me, if you will."

"Speak it," said Copplestone, abruptly, "and be gone."

"My poor boy, who you but now called an idiot—a curse on the hour that deprived him of his wits—my poor boy took some foolish part, for lack of knowing better, against the troopers at Tamerton revel; and they have carried him away to prison for it. You are a justice of the peace, Sir John, and have power with them. You can obtain his liberty, if you will but interfere; Captain Butler swears that my poor lad struck down one of his men, and that he had sense enough to know what he did was unlawful. Butler threatens, should the man die of his hurt, which he is like to do, that the boy shall be hanged for his offence."

Copplestone listened attentively. "Had it been a small matter," said he, "I would have done something; but Butler is high in command, much trusted, much in power; and—and I have reasons—I am compelled—in short, I must not thwart him now, whatever be his purpose. Be satisfied with this assurance, if I could have helped you I would have done it."

"I am not satisfied," said Dame Gee; "be the lad wise or foolish, he is my own flesh and blood, and I know you can

save him, if you list to do it. Many a worse boy have you set out of prison, to please those you would win over to your mind. Butler was long your friend, and you can do it and defy him."

"I tell you that I cannot do it, woman," said Copplestone. "There are reasons, potent reasons, that make it most necessary I should not stir up ill blood in Butler, by opposing him at such a time as this. I tell you I dare not do it—that is a strong word when I speak it. I dare not, no, not if your idiot boy were my own flesh and blood."

"He will die, then; die in a prison or on the gallows," said the suppliant; "he will die as surely as the sun is in the heavens."

"Let him die, then," said Copplestone, sternly; "trouble me no more about a miserable idiot lad, who is of no worth to me, nor to thee either. Go and do my bidding; I have other things to look to than that of opening cages for gaol birds in these times. Begone!"

Dame Gee obeyed, for she well knew the inflexible character of her patron; and that as he possessed the secret of her dealing in witchcraft, he held her in absolute command; since there were more Hopkinses than one abroad, into whose hands he could betray her if he chose so to do. As she passed down the long avenue of trees that led to Warleigh House, she suddenly stopped, and turned towards it with a bitter and malignant expression in her countenance.

"Idiot son!" she cried; "gaol bird! thou hast other things to do than to open cages for such as he is!—I know thou hast, thou deep, plotting, cunning villain. But I will find a way to requite thee for this hard-hearted refusal to save my son's life. It is my son, my favourite son; once a fair-haired boy, full of sense and spirit; though now a simple idiot. Thou hast called on me for counsel! bid me read the book of fate to thee. I will unfold a terrible page, and take thee even in thy own snare. Thou shalt feel what it is to awaken a mother's vengeance, and I that mother: even now will I curse thee, before I leave thy own land, thy ill-gotten land."

Saying this, Dame Gee, who, after having for many years cheated others, sometimes imposed upon herself, prepared to perform one of those rites of her unhallowed arts which she deemed most deadly against an enemy. The rite was of barbarous origin; and its existence is even now to be traced in the more remote parts of Cornwall and Devon. She had a small ashen wand in her hand, which she now broke, and turning "sun-ways" as it was called, that is, following the course of that luminary, she walked thrice round in the figure

of a small circle, whilst many times breaking her wand and cursing Sir John Copplestone as she did so.

As she threw the last piece of the broken wand upon the ground, she said, "It has charmed many an adder and many a wily snake;* but no snake more wily in his dark and winding way, no adder more poisonous in its forked tongue, than thou art in thy dark course, and in thy false, deceitful lips. But thou shalt become as worthless and as wasted as these broken fragments, that I trample under foot; and like them shalt thou lie withering in the dust. I have cursed thee, and now will I seek one whom thou dreamest not of. I will fathom thy deep purpose, though it were hidden as the depths of the sea—I will fathom it to work out my revenge; for long hast thou been to me a tyrant, and now thou wilt become a murderer to my son."

So saying, she wrapped her cloak about her, and set off to execute a plan which will hereafter be made known to the reader. We must now say a few words respecting Copplestone's extraordinary connexion with Dame Gee.

Sir John, like many of the dark and dangerous characters of his time (and some amongst the most noted have not escaped the charge), trafficked with those who practised the two great juggles of the age—judicial astrology and the grand arcanum. It was long before such follies were exploded: in the days of the civil wars they were nearly as potent as in those of Elizabeth and James the First. Insensible to any one principle of true religion, practising only its external forms, and believing its most perverted doctrines, Copplestone was, nevertheless, a slave to superstition, a very child in credulity. Nor were those found wanting to take advantage of the weak points in his character, and by fostering his follies, or flattering his hopes, to turn both to the account of knavery and imposture.

The artful Dame Gee, whose shrewdness enabled her to deal with such a man, was amongst those who had most cunningly and most effectually trafficked with Sir John Copplestone in these dark and nefarious acts of folly and superstition—a circumstance that will sufficiently account for his calling in her aid at a moment when he hoped to forward a deep laid plan, upon which he rested the future schemes of his ambition.

In accordance with that plan, Copplestone feared, at the present moment, to incense Captain Butler, else it is not unlikely he would have complied with Dame Gee's earnest

* The peasantry of Dartmoor charm snakes and render adders harmless, by making a circle about them with the bough of an ash tree. They also hang "ashen boughs" round the necks of their cattle to preserve them from being bitten by these reptiles.

solicitations to interfere for the preservation of her unfortunate son. However much he might fear a quarrel with Butler at this time, he had done, perhaps, a more imprudent thing in offending Dame Gee; since by such an act he had roused all the slumbering spirit of ill-will she had long entertained towards him, and the fire of her revenge, when once thoroughly kindled, was certain to burst forth in a fearful and destructive flame.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

———This outward sainted deputy,
Whose settled visage and deliberate word
Nips youth i' the head, and follies doth emmew,
As falcon doth the fowl—is yet a devil.

SHAKSPERE.

It was towards the evening of that day on which Dame Gee had held her interview with Sir John Copplestone that he sallied forth alone to visit the hut of Black Will. Sir John mused as he paced slowly forward; the deep shadows of the long avenue of old trees under which he passed being no bad emblem of the state of his own mind—there all was darkness indeed. He was miserable in himself, for he had not a quiet moment: his fears were those of guilt; they rose in succession to torment him, the last being ever the worst, like the plagues sent out to chasten the Egyptians.

The very fears of the wicked are a proof of God's divine providence in the moral government of the world, and that nowhere does he leave himself without a witness,—hope and fear being as ministering angels, the one of peace to the good conscience, the other of terror to the guilty breast. Even where there is no actual guilt, unless the providence of God is constantly borne in mind, from the cradle to the tomb, such is the nature of man, he is prone to disquiet himself in vain; and folly often grows into error, and finally into sin of the greatest magnitude.

Even so had it been with Sir John Copplestone: he had in his youth run a career of extravagance and folly; in maturer age, having changed his object but not his heart, from a foolish he grew into a wicked man. He was of a nature that never spared an enemy or forgave an injury, however remote might be its date. He had acquired great wealth; and was far advanced, by crooked and devious paths, on the road which leads to the very summit of fortune. As he trod the ascent, so did the view become more and more expanded to the eye of his ambition. It ranged over a vast territory that he longed to call his own, no matter if the price to win it became, Judas-like, the wages of blood. Such was the worse than Egyptian darkness that hung over the mind of Copplestone; and still,

as did the infidel king, he hardened his heart, and followed his wicked course.

The hut of his wily dependent, Black Will (a man employed, like the wolf dog, solely on account of his fierceness), stood within Sir John's domain. It was a low, thatched tenement, of a solitary and gloomy character, not ill suited to that of its possessor. On all sides was it surrounded with dark and massive forest trees, through which the sun scarcely sent an enlivening beam at noonday. The hut was old and ivy-grown; the windows so narrow as to resemble slits in the wall; and the door, unlike those of most cottages, was strong, cased with iron nails, and seldom open,—it was as hard and as close as its master's soul.

Sir John advanced; but stopped ere he struck on this ill-omened portal. He paused as if for a moment to listen should aught be stirring within. No sounds met his ear, and one loud knock of his walking staff announced his desire of admission.

Our English moralist has said, "that to dread no eye and to suspect no tongue is the great prerogative of innocence." It could not, therefore, be that of Sir John Copplestone; for though a daring as well as a determined man, and never yielding to an inferior, yet he never could meet Black Will without those involuntary feelings of undefined suspicion that are always allied to fear. Will was a low, base fellow, of no more importance in the scale of society than a beggar who asks an alms by the way-side. But Will possessed a knowledge of certain secrets, gained by having been made the tool of wickedness, that gave him consequence even in the eyes of Sir John Copplestone; so much are the vile invested with importance if they possess the means of becoming the betrayers of those by whom they are employed.

Sir John and his dependent were, for a moment, both silent; as Will, who probably guessed a visit from his master was not likely to be one that either would think safe, if liable to sudden interruption, secured the door with bolt and bar, and then with an air of gloomy civility, asked him if his Honor would please to be seated after his evening walk.

Sir John was not a man to waste words where business was in question. He made no reply; but, looking Black Will earnestly in the face, drew from beneath his cloak, a bundle of papers, and said, "Hast thou learnt, as I commanded, if Colonel Holborn is yet returned to Plymouth after the leaguer of Sydenham-house?"

"He is, Sir John," replied Will.

"Good," said Copplestone. "Here is a packet for him, which thou must this night place in his own hand ere thou shalt

know rest or sleep. Remember, into no hand, save his own, must this be given. Colonel Holborn will, on the receipt of this, deliver to thee certain warrants which thou must as hastily bear back again to me. Be faithful but in this, and thou art made, Will, made for ever. All I have hitherto done for thee shall be as nothing; whilst one man secured, thou wilt have nothing to fear for past offences. Dost thou understand me?"

"I do," said Black Will with a malicious smile.

"Ay," cried Copplestone, "that insolent companion, that foul-mouthed railer, who spurned me to my very face, who rendered me suspected, even by the very men with whom I was in commission—why he, I say, he shall be given into my hand, as Saul was into that of David; but not as David requited Saul will I do by him: we will take from him something more than the skirts of a garment. His life is forfeit, and it shall be paid. Thou didst miss him once: this time the work is sure; and that by the open process of a summary law."

"This is news, indeed," cried Will, who had his own especial reasons for dreading the person so darkly alluded to by Copplestone; and he added with a ruffian look of satisfaction, "I could risk the gallows with pleasure to have my turn with him."

"There is no risk," said Copplestone, "the plan is surely laid, and cannot fail us. I have done much, but not all yet; I have lived no coward life: every act of mine has had a high purpose and as high a danger. Ambition is no crawler on the earth: its toils are upward, its hopes have a high wing, and place him who wins the prize far above the vulgar herd of common men; they gaze and follow him with weak and wondering eyes, as they would look upon an eagle's flight in the clouds." —Sir John Copplestone spoke this as if giving vent to his own feelings and daring thoughts, without having any particular purpose of addressing them to Black Will; but he turned a fixed glance upon him as he thus continued—

"Mark me—to-night, when all is hushed and still, when every cottage has closed its door, and its inmates sleep, so that no eye may watch thy steps to rouse suspicion, then do my errand. The moon will give light to thy path, and it shall lead thee to obtain a rich reward; so thou art but faithful."

Black Will, who for many years had been the tool, as well as in a great measure the confident, of Sir John Copplestone, and had often attended to his instructions, accompanied as they were in general by his fanatical ravings, now listened in gloomy satisfaction, as his master unfolded to him the deeply

laid plan that was to be accomplished with so much mystery and zeal,—a plan that should complete his own schemes of profit and advantage, and enable him to repay all his agents and instruments in the undertaking, even beyond their utmost hopes. He now placed in the hands of Black Will the packet for Colonel Holborn; and as Will prepared to arm himself for his night journey to Plymouth, Sir John gave him the most minute instructions, together with the pass-word, in order that he might obtain instant admission into the presence of the commanding officer of the guard.

Copplestone now rose to return home; and ere he did so, gave a parting caution to his messenger in these words:—"See that thou dost my errand, but never prate about it. If any man question thee, let thy answer be civil, but let it be one to shew thou hast no more knowledge of my affairs than the wax which keeps them close sealed within these papers. If drink be offered thee, shun it as thou wouldst a betrayer; for wine that promiseth joy hath its end in sadness; and will often, like the vices of Nebuchadnezzar, lead to such sin and folly as shall send forth the tippler naked, poor and beggared, to feed with the very beasts for penance in the field. Forbear it, I say, and be faithful; for, as Solomon saith, such are the wise."

With these instructions Sir John concluded his visit; and leaving Black Will to set out on his journey, he retraced his steps to Warleigh, pondering as he went, on the probabilities of failure or success that attended the great and daring scheme on which he now rested the ultimate hopes of his avarice and his ambition.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Great piety consists in pride;
To rule is to be sanctified;
To domineer, and to controul,
Both o'er the body and the soul,
Is the most perfect discipline,
Of church rule, and by right divine.
BUTLER'S *Hudibras.*

THOSE who live in times when, it is to be hoped, the government of this country will not again be so rudely shaken by civil strife, can scarcely form any adequate idea, on a general view, of the state of discord, party spirit, and constant agitation that had crept into the bosom of even the most retired domestic circles during the Great Rebellion. It is only by an attentive observance of the more minute parts of history and biography that scenes like these become disclosed; and without some knowledge of the spirit of such fearful times a mere relation of events, such as we have to set before the reader, would seem not only improbable but unnatural.

By an attentive examination, however, of these particulars, we shall find that unity of purpose, of feeling, and of opinion, was then rarely found. In public, even amongst the most brave and noble, jealousy, indecision, or mistrust, divided and vexed their councils. We find the baneful effects of these evils followed close even on the steps of victory, and threatened to rob her of her crown. This, indeed, was more especially manifested in those unhappy jealousies that existed between Prince Rupert, Prince Maurice, and the Marquis of Hertford, immediately after the capture of Bristol. The want of prudence in the first-named leader, evinced by his adventuring a battle at Marston Moor, where Cromwell and Fairfax gained so signal a victory, being solely prompted by those heart-burnings of jealousy in council which too often tarnished the lustre of a character otherwise so glorious.

But these divisions were not alone confined to public men: towns, villages, families, and nearest friends, were at variance, even in their very loyalty, and how much more so in their religion, or where a spirit of national discontent fostered that of private discord! Unity, in fact, was scarcely anywhere to be found, except in the mere mob, and their union was nothing more than an agreement in all that was wrong, having

no end but tumult and agression—a desire to pull down, without a knowledge how to build up, the general character of all insurgents; where whatever keeps them in check becomes oppression in their eyes, and their leaders drive them on, as hunters do hounds, to run down the game for the prey and the profit of their masters.

During the civil wars, fathers and sons, and even husbands and wives (for women then, in politics and religion, became as violent as the men), were so at variance that it seemed literally true every house was divided within itself. The domestic circle, and even the cheerful fireside of home, was rendered gloomy and unhappy, a scene of fierceness and of strife, by perpetual arguments and quarrels on such points as the privileges vested in the prerogative of the crown, the rights of the people, of parliament, the army, and how far resistance might go before it became rebellion, etc. etc.

What, however, was far worse, and roused yet a fiercer spirit of domestic hatred and contest, was the perpetual disagreements on the more abstract and mystical parts of religion. The nearest in blood and connexion wrangled, quarreled, and contended so hotly over these abstruse points of Christianity, that they forgot they were Christians, and had no charity left for one another, substituting, in place of that meekness and brotherly love (so enjoined in Scripture), hatred and strife equally condemned by it. Not content that God had made plain every principle connected with the duties and faith of man, to guide him to salvation, they would not rest till they had gained admission into the hidden counsels of the Most High; their own presumption leading them to think that those things which were above the capacity of man, and therefore wisely held aloof from it, they could unfold and lay open as readily as they certainly did their own folly and conceit in the attempt: so that whilst many of these wild enthusiasts wholly overlooked plain and positive commands, such as order, peace, and obedience, they puzzled their heads, day and night, and heated their brains and passions, over such points as the nature of free-will, election, a state of grace, predestination, pædobaptism, etc. etc.; and all those endless toils and difficulties of theology, which none but the most profoundly learned divine should venture to touch upon, and even then with reverence and modesty. And thus did these enthusiasts often rush madly into all the horrors of bloodshed and rebellion, from an abuse of those very doctrines which, when rightly understood by the humble-minded and sober Christian, are found to proclaim the most entire peace and goodwill on earth towards all mankind.

From this state of domestic misery arose a petty and private warfare, so that fathers often watched their sons, and sons their fathers, to spy into their actions, and, if possible, to read their very thoughts. Instances have come down to us, authenticated by strong evidence, where the very ties of nature became broken; and sons betrayed their own parents in the brutal ferocity of fanaticism and party zeal. Some virtuous instances have also been recorded of parents and children, who watched over the conduct of each other with the purest intentions, to save them from what such well-meaning persons most truly deemed to be a crying sin — that of rising against the king, and dipping their hands in the blood of their fellow-countrymen, by secretly abetting the foulest acts of treachery and malice.

We have been led to preface the present chapter with these observations, because they will assist in throwing light on some remarkable acts that we are about to record in the conduct of Gertrude Copplestone. Her sense of what was due to God and man made her grieve as she witnessed the wicked spirit now abroad in all directions; but when, from her own attentive observations, she was induced to think her father was playing a double part, that he was about to commit some act of treachery which would ruin him in body and soul, with a piety that called for the most strenuous exertions of her firm and resolute mind, she resolved, if possible, to save him from so much misery and guilt.

By managing with great prudence, Gertrude had contrived to obtain some valuable information from Dame Gee—a woman whose arts and love of gain had, more than once, made her a tool of both parties; sometimes betraying the one or the other, as occasion offered for doing so with profit to herself. Gertrude knew the character of this woman and despised it; but, alas! what could she do? from Dame Gee she gained intelligence she could obtain from no other quarter. She treated her, therefore, with civility, and though she never entirely trusted her, yet she deemed her father's safety was concerned in not wholly discouraging her.

Dame Gee was, in fact, possessed of means of gaining information in a very remarkable manner. She had been an active agent in her day; and, we suspect under an assumed name, was the very woman (spoken of by Clarendon) who, at one period, had been employed in the capacity of a female spy during the siege of Reading by no less a person than Colonel Fielding himself. She had afterwards acted in the same dangerous office during the leaguer of Rougemont Castle. This occupation had led to her connexion with the notorious Captain

Coleman, who, less artful, less clever, but not less villanous than herself, had frequently been duped, by his more subtle female associate, in the dark trade of treachery and intrigue —a trade generally productive of small gain to its minor agents, who in the end are often sacrificed to prevent suspicion from falling on their employers. This brief statement will sufficiently explain by what means many things became known to Dame Gee, of which, under other circumstances, she never could have acquired the slightest knowledge.

Sir John Copplestone had injured her feelings in the very point where they were most susceptible of injury: she had vowed a bitter revenge; nor was she long in seeking the surest means to effect it, though this she did in a manner so as to secure herself from any mischief that might be the result of her discoveries. Her plan was in agitation, and as one step towards its completion she sought (not long after her last interview with Sir John) his daughter, the gentle Gertrude.

Dame Gee found her alone; and glancing her eye on the expressive countenance of the young lady, she saw in a moment that melancholy and unhappy thoughts were the companions of her musings. With an affected air of extreme civility she addressed Gertrude, and made one of those speeches she was wont to use when she wished to impress on the mind of her hearer that she had something to communicate of import, which had become known to her by more than mortal means.

Gertrude had too much good sense to give way to the follies of her time; and her own heart never plotting evil, she had no wish, no anxieties, like her father, to unfold that book of fate which is wisely hidden from human sight. Gertrude, however (though she discouraged Dame Gee's pretensions to supernatural powers), did not doubt but that she had something really of import to communicate; and begged her, therefore, in a mild and persuasive tone, to say what it might be.

"Your father, young lady," replied Dame Gee, "is busy of late, and seems as if he feared things were not likely to be so quiet as most people would desire they might be, after a long and cruel war. Did you hear of the store of arms that was brought in last night by Black Will and some of his fellows, after all the house was gone to rest? Your father was up though; and the arms are secured within the strong vault under the great north chamber."

Gertrude started, and turned pale. She had heard nothing; but remembered well, ere she retired to rest, seeing her father busied in examining the keys of certain vaults and chambers of the old house, that he always held under his own especial care. She recollected also that Black Will was closeted with

him for more than an hour; and that Coleman, at the same time, had been in the house.

"Ay," continued Dame Gee, who watched the anxious change so evident in Gertrude's countenance, "you may disbelieve, if you will, that I can read the stars aright. But one thing do not disbelieve, that I know much of what is now in progress to work out evil; and oh," she continued with emphasis, "as you love the man of your heart, credit what I now tell you—if he comes here on the evening of the twentieth of June he is a lost man, as sure as the sun is in the heavens; for the twentieth of June is fated to be an evil day in Warleigh House, unless——"

"What mean you, woman?" said Gertrude: "tell me, in plain terms, what danger is to be feared, and how I can avert it. To whom did you allude when you but now spoke so strangely, when——"

"When I spoke of the man of your heart?" said Dame Gee: "nay, never blush, young lady, since many besides myself know that Gertrude Copplestone, the rich heiress of Warleigh, would have given herself, heart and hand, to Sir William Bastard, had not her father and that gallant cavalier been at deadly feud about an old quarrel. They are friends now, but only such for their own interests; yet one of them will prove a betrayer."

"Speak," said Gertrude; "I beseech you so speak, that I may understand your meaning. This is no time for dark hints. If there is danger, let me know it in plain words; and do not thus expose my father, or the gentleman you have named somewhat too boldly, to fall under suspicion from your dark and evil suggestions."

"You are angry, lady," said Dame Gee; "yet I have spoken nothing but truth, however it may seem mysterious or obscure. Mark me, for I dare not linger; your father was in the hall when I stole in to you, and he seemed as if about to come this way. Mark me—there is a deep and wicked scheme afoot to entrap Sir Piers Edgcumbe, Sir William Bastard, your unhappy uncle, and many other noble gentlemen, whom I dare not name. I warn you of their danger. You will not, I know, betray me in return for the service I now do you in making known these things. And you dare not," she continued, in a bolder tone; "for your father is in my power; ay, Sir John Copplestone is in my power; yet for your sake, if I am well used, I would not employ it for his destruction."

Gertrude was about to speak, but Dame Gee would not suffer her, and in a hurried manner she thus concluded her strange and alarming intimation:—"I know you love Sir

William Bastard—if by the timely warning I now give you he is saved, I shall call on you to reward the good deed, by an act of service that I think you may do for me after this twentieth day of June. Believe me, I speak truth. Examine yourself, and see if there is not cause for suspicion. Tell your father that you have discovered he is preparing his house for a state of defence. Question him closely; and if he does not himself confirm the truth of all I have spoken, never trust me more. The twentieth of June—remember; on that day I will be here; I will learn more, and in the mean time do you find out some way to warn your friends of their danger. If you fail, they are lost."

So saying, Dame Gee hastily retreated, leaving Gertrude in a state of mind the most distressed, yet resolved so to act that nothing on her part should be wanting to satisfy herself if what had been spoken might be false or true.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

The best way is, to slander Valentine
With falsehood, cowardice, and poor descent;
Three things that women highly hold in hate.
SHAKSPERE.

THERE was an anxious, a disturbed, an angry expression about her father's countenance and manner when he met Gertrude, that he could not conceal from her observation. He looked as he felt—miserable. He was, in fact, a man encompassed by his own wickedness; it was to him as a charmed circle from which there was no escaping. His proud and stubborn spirit, prone to devise crimes and resolute to act them, had determined on the commission of a great deed of evil: yet the fear of mischance, the apprehension of some untoward circumstance that might arise to thwart his measures, and the goadings of conscience, which, in spite of all his hardness of heart, would sometimes sting him to the quick, kept his mind in that state of agitation which allowed him not a moment's peace.

This affected his temper, so that he had become irascible, impatient, and ready to quarrel or chafe about a straw with every one who approached him; glad, perhaps, to find some external object on which to vent the bitterness of those feelings that preyed upon himself. The meeting with his daughter in these moments was to her of unspeakable misery. She looked at him and shuddered; whilst her own heart whispered to her the fear that all she had heard was true. Her father was about to act the part of a betrayer. He had, apparently, no intention to communicate to her his plans, whatever they might be; for on Gertrude's questioning him about putting his house into a state of defence, he desired her, in a peremptory manner, to be silent.

"I cannot, sir," she said—"I cannot be silent, when I fear there is some plan in agitation that may affect your safety. I am your daughter, and I hope not a disobedient one. Oh, my father, do not thus frown upon me. Trust your child with your purposes; trust her, who would watch over your safety, had she the power to do so, as a guardian spirit. What have I done that you should thus chide me at the very moment when my feelings are to you those of duty and obedience?"

"Duty and obedience!" exclaimed Copplestone in a scornful tone; "yes, such obedience as you shewed to me when you encouraged the suit of Sir William Bastard, before I discovered his deep designs, and frustrated them."

"I had no intention to wed Sir William Bastard without your consent, sir," replied Gertrude; "and that I thought would not be denied to a gentleman of his birth and character."

"His birth and character!" cried Copplestone; "tell me not of such pretensions. I knew him years before you chose to fancy his vices into virtues, his dross into gold. I tell you, Gertrude, he was once a hair-brained prodigal: he spent his hours in idle mirth and foolery; kept open house, and hawks and haggards; and made midnight riots, and caroused deep healths with every idle reveller; turned his acres into wine-pots, and soon made his estates run with his horses on the gambling course; whilst his huntsmen and wild companions kept up an everlasting halloo to his follies, driving them on as madly as they did his hounds, till he, like the prodigal son, left his very father's house to feed with swine. His fortune broken, his plate melted to feed the fire of his own passions; and mortgages gained strength as his rent-roll fell into a consumption. He became at last a shameless borrower, one who would stand cap in hand for a jacobus or a silver crown to any thoughtless fellow who would lend it."

Gertrude felt exceedingly hurt at this bitter and exaggerated picture drawn by her father of some youthful errors on the part of Sir William Bastard, that had long since been atoned for by the most praiseworthy steadiness of conduct. She felt, at this moment, that in honour and in truth she could not but defend him from so gross an attack. "You wrong him, sir," she said; "you speak in severe terms of his youthful follies, and colour them too highly. You should remember that though you have often told me he sought your assistance in a time of need, yet, nevertheless, the instant he came into possession of the estates bequeathed to him by his uncle, he paid all his early debts, cast off his youthful follies, and appeared as a true gentleman, noble in act, courteous in speech. He has since injured his fortune, it is true; but it was in the King's service, and therefore it is a merit. His debt to you, however, was requited, and that to the last penny."

"Requited!" said Copplestone; "how did he requite me? I will tell you: when he was beggared in his fortunes, solely by his own follies and his unthrifty carriage, he sought me, to borrow money. I lent it on security being given; for I value not a doit a spendthrift's word—land and parchments must stand sponsors to it ere I part with a single coin."

"It is many years, sir," said Gertrude, "since Sir William Bartard needed or asked the assistance of any one."

"He was humble then," continued Copplestone, "and spoke small, and had a civil, asking eye, that settled on the ground as he begged of me the loan of some poor matter of a thousand pounds. But when my gentleman was a man again, had a great estate fall to him (like manna from heaven, for it seemed no less a miracle), then he paid me. But how paid me? With haughty pride, with insolence, because, forsooth, I refused my daughter to his asking; and he demanded of me an acquittance of his debt in a bold, high tone, as if he were a lord. But this was nothing; I was appointed to the commission to look after the sequestered estates of malignants and delinquent persons. How did he then treat me? I will tell you. He maligned me, abused my honour, injured my character, and charged me with the private robbery of public goods. I have sworn to requite my injuries, and he shall feel I have."

Shocked at these threatenings of an unforgiving and revengeful spirit, Gertrude said in a manner the most emphatic, "Oh, my father, do not indulge a feeling of resentment. Surely you do not, you would not, purpose to betray Sir William Bastard to his enemies? Heaven knows they are many, in these fearful times."

"I will not be questioned, purpose what I may," said Copplestone.

"But I trust you purpose no evil," said Gertrude, in an anxious manner. "Gracious heaven! what am I to think? I know you expect to hold in this house a solemn meeting of those you call your friends. Some of them, I confess, I have often felt surprised to hear you name as such. What must your purpose be, then, in that meeting, if you still indulge a spirit so full of bitterness towards one who is of their number?"

"Silence," exclaimed Copplestone; "Gertrude, I like not this spirit of curious questioning in you. Look that you do not quit the house: it is my command—a father's command. Stray not beyond these doors without my leave. I charge you on your obedience."

"I can have no temptation to disobey you, sir," she replied; "for did I do so, I know you have those about you who would be set on to follow me, as gaolers do the poor Royalists, when they are let out of their prisons for a few hours of seeming liberty. Yet if you have ever loved me, if I have ever deserved the name of a daughter in your sight, do not make me thus wretched by the dreadful doubts to which you have given birth. Tell me your purpose, and let me save you from *the danger* of your own fearful passions."

Copplestone looked sternly upon his daughter, and only said in reply, "Anger me no more by these inquiries. You have a woman's curiosity, that thinks a wonder lies hidden in every idle word, could you but shape it into sense. You have a busy spirit, Gertrude; your curiosity would unlock the secrets of a father's heart, expose all his most hidden thoughts to censure, and construe his lightest act by the measure of your own idle fancies. Away, away, keep your chamber, and trouble me no more."

It was in this angry mood Sir John Copplestone parted from his daughter. He had forbidden her leaving the house; she determined to obey him, well knowing how vain would be resistance, even to his most unreasonable commands. Now more than ever did she feel convinced that he had some deep-laid scheme in the purposed meeting of the Royalists. She resolved to trust Radcliffe, as far as her duty to her father would admit, with a knowledge of her fears; since she felt assured, however hostile he might have been to the king's cause, nevertheless he would be glad to become the means of preventing so great a crime as that of treachery. It was painful to speak on such a subject to Radcliffe, yet she thought it the safest and even the most delicate mode of procedure; well knowing that for her sake he would, as much as possible, spare her father any public censure, and act in the whole affair as if he did so on his own responsibility. He might save all parties from the effects of such premeditated misery and guilt.

She pondered on her plan; and ere she sought repose succeeded in obtaining an interview with young Radcliffe whilst her father was once more closeted with Black Will, in long and secret conference, in his own chamber.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

This, as I guess, should be the appointed time;
For o'er our heads have passed on homeward wing
Dark flights of rooks, and daws, and flocking birds.
Wheeling aloft with wild dissonant screams:
Whilst from each hollow glen and river's bed
Rose the white curling mist, and softly stole
Up the dark wooded banks.

JOANNA BAILLIE.

LEAVING Gertrude Copplestone and Amias Radcliffe, and all that concerns Warleigh, for the present, we must once more return to Mount Edgcumbe, where, on the evening of the nineteenth of June, in the old hall at the time of supper, were found seated several guests of Sir Piers. It was seven o'clock —an hour rather later than usual for the evening's meal. A long table, round which the guests had assembled, was covered with the most solid and plentiful fare.

Yet neither the good cheer nor the good wines that were circulated freely seemed to give spirits to any one of the party. A portentous gloom sat on the countenance of each, and few and brief were the words spoken during the repast. No sooner were the servants withdrawn, and none remained but Sir Piers and his devoted friends, than all spoke, and almost all in the same inquiring tone, since but one feeling, that of intense anxiety, seemed to possess every bosom.

"Where tarries he? how is this? He is not come; there is no news, no intelligence: Burley promised that on this day we should have certain information, if his attempt succeeded. To-morrow he will be here."

"If alive, he will be here," said Sir Piers; "but who can answer for the casualties of human life, and especially in such an attempt as he meditates? He may live or die in it: if he lives, it will be to such a glory as any brave man would run a thousand chances and dangers to win; and if he dies why I would not wish my own son, were he now in England to be thus nobly employed, a fairer end. His grave will be pointed out in after-ages as a monument of honourable though unfortunate daring; yet, gentlemen, I am not so easily cast down as you seem to be by the non-arrival of a messenger: a man may do a great act, yet have neither leisure nor opportunity to send off a servant to proclaim it, even to his most impatient friends.

Besides, it is not yet dark: there are many hours between this and midnight; he may yet come."

"You are right, Sir Piers," said young Elford: "Captain Burley's messenger may be even now waiting but for the cover of night to steal upon us with more security; and who knows if the honest boatman intrusted by you to ferry him over may not row round to the back of the Mount, or land him near the battery, as a spot least liable to observation. I will walk down to the shore, and be upon the look-out, to give the signal: we despair too soon, and frighten ourselves with shadows."

"Do so, my young friend," said Sir Piers; "I am no despondent. Hope hath not forsaken us, and never will, I trust, so long as there is one gentleman left in the county of Devon who is ready to risk his life and fortune to join any enterprise in the attempt to succour our unhappy king. May God preserve him! many have been his misfortunes, but surely this is the bitterest of them all. Born to possess a kingdom, and with his generous and noble mind, to have all his actions, nay, his very virtues, slandered, and now to be a prisoner, and to lie counting clock after clock, as if time had nothing to do but to make the hours sorrowful and heavy with the royal captive's injuries! My heart bleeds when I think upon these things."

"Not so mine," said the gallant Trelawny of Trelawne, who was one of the party. "I would give bleeding hearts to the king's enemies, and keep my own whole and stout for his service."

"I will down to the beach; you shall hear the moment the boat comes in sight," said Elford, "if it comes at all."

Reginald Elford left the house; and hastening to the beach, strolled leisurely along, or stood, with fixed eye and folded arms, gazing on the "dark blue sea," which, beautiful and serene, lay before his view. The evening was calm: a slight breeze that gently swelled the sails of the vessels as they glided along, gave a freshness to the air, but was insufficient to agitate the boundless plain of waters which spread itself around; for Reginald now viewed it from the back of Mount Edgcumbe, as he had strolled thither, thinking it possible the boat (for greater security in landing its passenger without observation) might row round even as far as Cawsand Bay.

So long did he linger, that the sun had already made a 'fiery set,' leaving on the horizon long traces of its effulgence. These gradually died away, and were succeeded by the shades of evening; so that before he thought of retracing his steps the moon arose, silvering the ocean with that sublime effect, which never fails to attend her amid those watery tides over which she is considered to have so great an influence.

The ocean, stilled to gentle murmurs, for the breeze had

rather dropped than increased at sundown, and the beauty and stillness of the scene, somewhat calmed the mind of young Elford as, with deep feelings of interest, he thought of the dangers to which the king and his partisans must be exposed, should failure attend the bold and meditated attempt in favour of the unfortunate Charles.

Reginald at length gave up all hope of the arrival of the boat, so earnestly desired; but willing to take a last look towards the most probable place of landing, late as it was, he once more strolled along near the battery ere he returned to the house. Whilst doing so he heard the splash of an oar; and listening attentively, it seemed to him as if some boat was advancing that had kept as much as possible in shore, and had, in fact, glided unperceived, under the shelter of some large and overhanging trees, that in this quarter dipped their branches at high water upon the very surface of the waves.

He watched with breathless attention; and now perceived, fast advancing towards a flight of steps, which then afforded an entrance into the private gardens, a boat with several persons in it. They were perfectly visible, for one held a lighted torch; and by its red and glaring beams Reginald perceived the intruders were dressed fantastically, masked and armed to a man. Exceedingly surprised, if not alarmed, at the sight, he stayed only a moment to be assured their purpose was to land on the grounds of Mount Edgcumbe, and then set off towards the house with the swiftness of a hunted deer.

As soon as he could find breath enough to speak, he exclaimed as he entered the hall, to Sir Piers and his companions, "Arm, gentlemen, arm! prepare for your defence; the enemy is upon us: a boat, with men in it, masked and armed, has put in shore. I saw them; they are even now landing in the private gardens."

"We will meet them, then," said Trelawny; "God grant they may not have intercepted the King. Surely they must have gained some intelligence. Masked! why this is an old device. Ford House was betrayed at a masked ball, by men who dared do a deed of treachery, but would not shew their faces as traitors. We will not yield tamely, though: what say you, Tremaine? shall we forward and meet them, or shall we stand our ground here?"

"Make fast the doors, that is my counsel," said Colonel Tremaine: "the hall door is a stout one; and if they are only armed with common weapons, they can make no more impression upon it than they could do by battering at the old mew stone rock. They must have had some intelligence of our purpose; and thinking the king (who, may be, is escaped by *Burley*'s means) had taken refuge here, hither do they come

to seize upon him. Draw, gentlemen, and let me have the honour to conduct your defence; that is, if Sir Piers Edgcumbe will allow me to take the lead in his house."

"Stay, Colonel Tremaine; have patience, Trelawny; hear me Reginald Elford," cried Sir Piers; "you are all mad; you know not what you do; your very eagerness may be the means to ruin that cause for which you would gladly die. How know you that these men have received any intelligence of our purpose? or come hither thinking to find the king? We must keep the peace at this crisis at any risk; a broil now with any of the Plymouth people, or with any of Colonel Holborn's men, would ruin all. We might have a guard placed in the house, Burley might arrive with the liberated captive, and by our precipitation he might have no place left in which to shelter his head. Hear me: put up your arms, let lights be brought; let the old hall blaze as if we were all met at a merrymaking; throw abroad the doors, so as not even to have an appearance of concealment; admit these men as revellers, since they come in that guise; speak them fair; let them have wine; and call hither my daughter and her companions: we will seem gay, friends, though a heavy heart hides itself under a light smile. These appearances may disprove all suspicion; and if not, if they come to offer us wrong, why we have each a sword by our sides, gentlemen, and we can but draw when necessity commands it. What think you? Say I not well, Tremaine? You are an old officer, and ought to know that in war a well-played stratagem is often the surest mode of defence."

"You are right, Sir Piers," said Tremaine: "we can but resort to arms if we find ourselves in actual danger; and, after all, who knows but that this may be some mad prank of the young and idle royalists, who have now nothing to do but to divert themselves with the show of those alarms that will soon enough become real, if the west be once again in arms. And if they are true men, we may shew them where a game, worthy of men, is to be played out."

"I will go order all myself," said Sir Piers. "Here Gregory, William, knaves! where loiter ye? set open the hall doors, bring lights, bring wine, and call hither your young mistress and her companions."

Sir Piers busied himself in preparation; and as he did so Trelawny whispered Elford, "Let us," he said, "mingle with these men: let each comer be closely watched; so that if there is the least cause to fear foul play we may be ready at a moment's warning. You will keep a sharp eye and a ready hand."

"Never fear me," said Elford; "I will not lack caution."

CHAPTER XL.

Must I give way and room to your rash choler?
Shall I be frighted when a madman stares?
SHAKSPERE.

All was prepared; and soon after a band of persons, seven or eight in number, each carrying (what was then something unusual) a light shield and a drawn sword, advanced, headed by their torch-bearer, towards the house.

Sir Piers and his company stood ready to receive them: the foremost masker led on; and graciously saluting the master of the house, declared his purpose to be no other than an attempt to renew a good old custom, once followed in Devon, but since the civil wars had divided friends and neighbours much fallen into neglect—being no other than the custom of the young and the gay of any town or village to go forth in masked companies, to revel at the house of the chief person of the parish, on any day that was held to be one of more than ordinary rejoicing in his family. "And this, Sir Piers," continued the spokesman, "being the nineteenth of June, the birthday of your absent son, we are come to shew you that we have not forgotten one who was our gallant young companion, though he is now far away from us; we come, therefore, to give you joy, to sing you a song, to dance a round or so with these fair ladies, to drink a health to the heir of your house, and then to bid you a good night."

"You are welcome, gentlemen, for such an honest purpose," said Sir Piers; "and though times are not so gay with us as they were before these civil discords, yet do I, who am old, and something worn with care, rejoice to see that the young can still bid defiance to him, and can have courage enough to renew those harmless sports that have been cried down by puritans, alike from the pulpit and from the drum-head of every military preaching. In faith, gentlemen, you are right welcome. I fill this cup to the health you would propose—that of my absent son. You will favour me by pledging it in a brimming goblet of wine."

"Gladly, Sir Piers," said he who had hitherto acted as spokesman; "but let us first take a round with these fair ladies; we come not unprovided for mirth: our recorders are

with us; and one who can touch a viol with as lively a hand as ever made light feet trip it to jocund music. I would, with your good leave, lead out your fair daughter, would she grace me so much as to become my partner in the movements of a pavan."

"A pavan!" said Sir Piers: "nay, not in so grave and majestic a dance as that is—a dance only fitted for courts at a solemn revel; rather choose one where all may join. The 'country round' was a dance in my young days that every fair damsel loved for its light step and lively measure. Let it be a country round."

"With all my heart, sir," said the masker; and advancing to Mistress Robina Edgcumbe, he solicited and obtained her hand as his partner. Reginald Elford offered to lead out Agnes; but she made some excuse, and said she would dance with him presently. Sir Piers seemed perfectly satisfied that the masked revellers were really no other than they professed themselves to be: but Reginald did not feel satisfied; for he fancied that, in one of them, he recognised the very last person he would desire to see at Mount Edgcumbe, and especially at such a moment.

He watched narrowly this suspected person; and in order the better to do so, did not offer again to lead out Agnes to the dance. He now observed that the stranger looked round the room with an inquiring eye, before he ventured to select a partner; and rather hung back, till Agnes chanced to pass near him. In a moment he was by her side, and after speaking a few words to her in a low whispering voice, he led her forth to dance.

Elford, who now recollected the indifference with which she had at first treated his offer to become her partner, and concluded that as he declined dancing she would do the same, felt exceedingly angered and irritated by her easy preference of the stranger; and now as he stood watching her with all the bitter feelings of a lover suffering under a slight from his betrothed mistress, not the least action of hers escaped his jealous eye.

After she had gone down the dance (for a country round was nothing more than what we now call a country dance), and stood at the bottom with her masked partner, he observed that the incognito whispered to her, and that she listened with an earnestness and attention that convinced him the speaker could be no stranger. At length, the dancing having ceased, wine was brought forward, and a full cup being proposed, the maskers did not hesitate to withdraw their visors, as they drank to the pledge.

Sir Piers, delighted to find that one or two of the party were the sons of gentlemen in the neighbourhood well known to him, lost all feelings of distrust; and ever anxious to stir up the zeal of his friends, and especially in social hours of mirth when hearts are full and open, he asked the young man who acted the part of spokesman, "if he knew any toast that ought to be given even before that of his own son, whose birthday they had not forgotten?"

"Ay, marry, Sir Piers," replied the reveller; "there is one toast I would willingly give, and that, I think, no one here will refuse to pledge, since the friends of Sir Piers Edgcumbe were ever those of loyalty. I fill this cup to the health of King Charles, whom God preserve, and restore to his loving subjects of Cornwall and Devon."

"Let the pledge go round," said Sir Piers. "Gentlemen, a thousand welcomes and a thousand thanks."

"But there is one present," whispered Elford to Trelawny, "who keeps in the background, though he was forward enough at the dancing, and who has neither raised his visor nor tasted the cup. But he shall not thus carry it off with impunity. Offer it to him Trelawny, and if he refuses ——"

The cup was offered and refused.

Elford rushed forward; and with that impetuosity which had on so many occasions mastered his better sense, when the stings of jealousy and suspicion roused his passions, he rashly exclaimed: "Beware, gentlemen, beware what you do; there is a traitor among you, and yonder is the man."

All eyes were now fixed on the masker.

"Disarm him, friends," cried Elford: "he is come hither for no honest purpose, else would he not fear to shew his face, and to do as those have done who are of his company."

"My purpose," replied the incognito, "is, may be, more honest than your words, since they belie an honourable man. I will not be disarmed; I have done nothing to merit this violence."

"You will find danger in resistance," said Elford.

"Talk not to me of danger," cried the masker with spirit; "think not I fear it. Where is it not to be found? You, sir, would teach me from whom, in this company, I may expect it?"

"I scorn to reply to words like these," said Elford. "You have stolen upon us under this disguise for some foul purpose: but you are known here, sir; yes, known, and I proclaim you as Amias Radcliffe, the rebel, the slayer of Sir Shilton Calmady! Unmask, if I speak falsely, and disprove my words."

"I will unmask, indeed," replied the young stranger; "but my business is not with you. I would speak with Sir Piers Edgcumbe, and alone."

"Master Amias Radcliffe," said Sir Piers, "I little thought, after our late meeting, to see you again in my house, and in this guise, too! I beseech you, whatever you may have to impart, that you would speak it in the presence of my friends; since I can have nothing to say to you of a private nature. Your principles, your opinions, and above all, the recollection I have of one unfortunate action of yours, must at all times render your company a pain to me: I am loth to speak thus, as I once had the good fortune to do you a service; and as little would I, willingly, use discourtesy to a guest who sought my roof in peace. Yet there is a cause, and you know it,—I never can receive into my friendship or confidence the man who, in upholding rebellion, killed my dearest friend, Sir Shilton Calmady."

"I shall not force any confidence on you, Sir Piers, against your will," said young Radcliffe, haughtily: "I came hither, as I believed, to do you a service; but if you will reject it thus, if I am not worthy even to be heard in what I would say, be the peril on your own head. I leave you, Sir Piers. Farewell!"

He bowed to Sir Piers, and turned an expresssive look on Agnes, as he bade her adieu. On quitting the hall, he passed close by Elford; and said, as he did so, in a low but determined tone, "If you want aught with me, sir, I am at hand. I shall walk slowly on towards the landing-place, near the battery."

"I will attend you, sir," said Elford; and he turned and spoke apart to Trelawny, as Amias left the hall.

The suddenness of the whole transaction greatly surprised Sir Piers Edgcumbe, who now, on addressing himself to the maskers, in order to obtain some explanation of what appeared to be so extraordinary, learnt to his extreme vexation that Amias Radcliffe had not only intruded on him, but on the very persons in whose company he came. One of them confessed that he had known Radcliffe as a gallant gentleman, who had in former times shared with the young men in the neighbourhood in their games and sports. He added, that on this evening he believed Amias attempted to reach Mount Edgcumbe alone, but could not obtain admission (in fact, Sir Piers had issued orders that no stranger should be suffered to cross after noon), and that hearing of the purposed revel of himself and his companions, who had obtained a promise of access from the gardener, through the private entrance, Rad-

cliffe prevailed, and was admitted to join the revellers, as the companion of their sports.

Reginald Elford lost not a word of the explanation thus given, which tended to make the conduct of Radcliffe appear even yet more suspicious. He had no sooner heard this statement than he rushed out of the house, and speedily overtook Amias, who purposely loitered on his way, no doubt expecting such an encounter. Breathless alike with running and with rage, Elford could scarcely demand, in articulate words, an explanation of the purpose which had produced a conduct so extraordinary on the part of Radcliffe.

The accused fired, in his turn, at the abrupt and passionate manner in which he was questioned, and only replied, that when he knew by what authority Reginald Elford had a right to expect any explanation, he would give one, but not till then.

"By what authority? by that of an injured man," cried Elford; "injured by you. Have you forgot, sir, our last meeting, and what then passed?"

"No, sir," said Radcliffe; "my memory is something too good to forget the conduct of a man who seems to forget his pretensions to the character of a gentleman. If it is your purpose to fasten a second quarrel on me, I am ready to meet it now, or at any time. Yet know, sir, and I speak it from no motives of fear, as you may find if you persist, that my religion forbids me to shed the blood of any man without it is in a lawful cause of quarrel, or in my own defence. I would, therefore, rather pardon your madness than resent it. Return then to the house; sleep upon your anger; and when you rise in the morning, think how far your passion has misled your reason; and do not force me to break God's laws against my better sense and conscience."

"Your conscience is as false as your pretensions," cried Elford; "you know that you have attempted, foully attempted, to injure me, and that in the most delicate quarter; to supplant me in the affections of a lady to whom I have long been affianced, and to sow the seeds of discord between us: we had no distrusts of each other till you came in the way; and it is my belief that you this night stole to Mount Edgcumbe for no other purpose than that of clandestinely seeking to gain speech with Mistress Agnes."

"And what if you have spoken truth?" said Radcliffe; "what concern may it be of yours?"

"My sword shall answer that question," said Elford. "Draw, sir, draw on the instant; and either swear to me by that religion, which you just now vaunted as your governing

principle, swear, I say, by Him in whose presence we both stand, never more to see this lady without my sanction, or take the consequences of your own dishonourable conduct. I give you the choice."

"It is made, sir," replied Radcliffe, as he drew his sword and threw himself into an attitude of defence; "I will take no such oath; you are mad with the most unreasonable jealousy that ever possessed the brain of man."

"Be your blood then upon your own head," said Elford; and he prepared to rush on his opponent. Ere he could do so, his arm was forcibly arrested by some one who had come upon him unawares; whilst another person also advanced, and drawing apart Radcliffe, spoke to him in a low, earnest, and persuasive tone.

Elford turned round and saw Colonel Tremaine. "You are mad, indeed, Reginald," he said, "as mad as the young fellow there, but just now, told you you were. Zounds, man! is this a time for tilting with swords, in the cold moonlight, at the instigation of a hot-blooded passion, as if the devil drove you on; and that, too, at a time when such a stake as we have in hand must be played for or lost? Keep fighting for a better cause than a foolish brawl like this about Mistress Agnes Piper's bright eyes. What if she did dance with a Roundhead, whilst he had his cropped hair hid under a mask, and you stood looking on; why, where is the harm done that nothing but bloodshed can make it right again? Put up, I say, put up; or I will shew you what it is to be enlisted under my orders; you shall have an arrest, as military as it may be, to cool your fury. I allow no fighting where I command, till I give the word for it."

"Let me go, Colonel Tremaine; unhand me, I beseech you," said Elford; "you do not know my injuries, the repeated injuries, I have sustained from Radcliffe. Let me have sway: I will not be fooled out of my requital, now that a fair occasion offers for it."

Colonel Tremaine swore a broad and military oath, not unusual with an old officer, who had long been in command amongst the cavaliers. He swore that Reginald should fight with no one that night; and suddenly snatching the sword out of Elford's hand, the fiery young man was left with no weapon of offence, except it might be his tongue; nor did he delay to use it, and that with much bitterness; for turning towards Radcliffe (with whom Trelawny had been in conversation), he said in a fierce and determined manner these few but remarkable words: "Think sir, of what I have said; or trust me, your life shall answer for it."

"For shame, Elford," said Tremaine, "thus to threaten a man who truly hath committed nothing worthy such resentment. Had I not known and loved thee from a boy, I could myself quarrel with thee for these unreasonable starts of passion. But you are in truth an Elford, brave and generous, but as furious as a tempest which sweeps down all before it when once the storm is up. Come, come along with me, you shall to bed, and sleep off this humour, or crush a cup with me for company; for truly you are not to be trusted with yourself or with your own passion."

So saying, Tremaine drew Elford back to the house, and left Radcliffe to find his way down to the boat, which speedily ferried him across the river.

CHAPTER XLI.

Farewell my home, my home no longer now,
Witness of many a calm and happy day;
And thou, fair eminence, upon whose brow
Dwells the last sunshine of the evening ray,
Farewell! Mine eyes no longer shall pursue
The westering sun beyond the utmost height,
When slowly he forsakes the field of light.
SOUTHEY.

THUS ended Amias Radcliffe's attempt to obey the commands of Gertrude Copplestone, who had instructed him to seek a private interview with Sir Piers Edgcumbe, and to warn him, that both himself and his friends might be on their guard, and not venture to Warleigh on the evening of the twentieth of June, unless his party should be strong enough to bid defiance to all dangers. Had Gertrude been entirely explicit in communicating her fears to Radcliffe, it is probable, that notwithstanding all that happened to discourage him, he would have persisted in demanding a private interview with Sir Piers Edgcumbe; but the difficulty of her situation, her anxiety, from motives of duty, to spare her father (as much as she could spare him), had produced so much embarrassment that her confidence in Amias had not been fully revealed. Radcliffe, even to his enemies, was of a generous and honourable disposition; notwithstanding, like many other young men of spirit in those unhappy times, he had been misled by fanatical ideas of liberty and patriotism. His love of classical literature had led him much to the study of Roman history—a study that, with young men, before they have sufficient judgment to weigh well the benefits resulting to the people from a monarchical form of government, often creates the most enthusiastic sentiments, and the wildest speculations about the glory of a commonwealth.

Thus had he been misled; and, like all hasty advocates of rebellion, he had helped to pull down the old fabric of the government without being able to lay one solid foundation stone of the new fabric that was to occupy its place. From mistaken notions he had been induced to espouse the popular side of the question; yet his just and better feelings, and every motive that can influence an honest mind, revolted at the

thoughts of treachery being employed even in support of his favourite cause.

Not less did he sorrow to see Charles, the descendant of a line of kings so ancient and so noble, betrayed to his worst enemies, and lying a prisoner at the mercy of those who, he thought, acted something too sternly whilst advocating the cause of civil and religious liberty. In his opinion, the sins of the sovereign had been bitterly atoned for in the sufferings of the man; and could he without betraying (as he deemed it) the cause of the people have freed Charles from his captivity, Radcliffe would have done so at the risk even of his own life. Though not trusted with a full knowledge of those measures going forward to liberate the King, and to bring him, if possible, in safety to the west of England (so that he might there head the royalists who were ready to rise in his behalf), yet, nevertheless, Radcliffe did suspect something was going on in favour of the august captive, and the information, slight as it had been, which he received from Gertrude, confirmed him in this belief; and that his guardian had mingled himself in the plot, with a view, in some way or other, to turn it to his own advantage, or very possibly to betray it, if such should ultimately prove the most likely means of benefiting himself.

Copplestone's temper, never other than gloomy and morose, since these plots had been going forward, had become stern, and at times almost savage to those about him. Of all persons on earth he most hated Radcliffe; and so much had he of late vented his ill-humour upon him, that Amias had resolved to quit his godfather's house, and at any risk (poor and almost penniless as he was kept by Copplestone) not to return to it, till he should be authorised, by coming of age, to claim his rights and inheritance. The fear, however, of some coercive measures being adopted against him induced him to conceal his intentions; but a circumstance we have now to relate made him think of carrying them into effect sooner than he purposed.

On the morning of the twentieth of June, Gertrude had waited with feelings of the most anxious suspense to gain, if but for a moment, an interview with Radcliffe; but so busy was her father in preparation for the expected meeting of the royalists that he was everywhere and rested nowhere. His eye seemed to be constantly on the watch, so that she dared not, during the early part of the day, quit her chamber to seek Amias, and there was no servant near in whom she could feel sufficient confidence to trust him with the conveyance of a letter of any importance. She was compelled to wait the event, and she did so with that sort of determined resolution which borders on despair.

The more she thought of what would in all probability be the fate of her uncle and of Sir William Bastard (should they come in the full confidence of the honour of Copplestone to the meeting), the more she dreaded lest Radcliffe should have failed in his mission to Sir Piers. Her fears, therefore, gave strength to her resolution, so that she felt capable of any high act of courage that the circumstances might demand. She knew well that where danger is paramount, whatever is done must often be done suddenly; and that however commendable prudence may be on ordinary occasions, in affairs of such a nature it degenerates into cowardice, and producing doubt ultimately leads to failure.

She reflected seriously on these things; and, in a moment, a thought darted into her mind that changed at once all her doubts into certainty. She would act, and no longer deliberate. Yes, she was sure of it, there was a means left by which she might save her friends, at all events she would attempt it. Her plan thus suddenly resolved upon was as suddenly put in execution; for it was her last and only hope. She must first, however, see Radcliffe, to learn how far he had, or had not, been enabled to execute her commission with Sir Piers.

Whilst engaged in these thoughts she was surprised by the appearance of Dame Gee, who under pretext of satisfying the superstitious inquiry of old Copplestone, relative to the success of his dark schemes, but in fact to assist her own, made a point on this day, of being at Warleigh. She had been closeted with her patron, and the intelligence she had obtained, by means of her accomplice, Coleman, served but to heighten the fears of Gertrude when that intelligence was now communicated to her by this artful dealer in spells and horoscopes. Gertrude was confirmed in her resolves.

She saw Radcliffe for a few minutes, and learnt from him the failure of his mission. Having ascertained this, with an agony of feeling that defies all description, she hastened to execute her plan. She wrote a few lines, addressed to Roger Rowle, enclosing the token; and bade him as he valued the life of her uncle and Sir William Bastard, that without delay he should warn both those gentlemen of the probable danger that would accrue to themselves and to their friends did they on that night venture near Warleigh. Dame Gee, who was eager, from motives of revenge, to disappoint the plans of Copplestone, engaged to find a messenger who should instantly set out for the glen of Lidford; as all depended on Roger Rowle's receiving the letter in time to prevent the royalists from attending at the appointed hour. Should Roger Rowle be now absent from the glen, Gertrude felt assured that all

was lost. Dame Gee's concern to thwart Copplestone was not less earnest, though from a far less noble motive. In her late interview with her patron, she had once more implored him to save her poor idiot son from death: the morrow was destined for his execution; since the trooper he had wounded by a blow on the head (certainly given more from folly than ill intention) was dead, and his fellow-soldiers clamoured for justice being done on the boy who had caused his death. All her efforts, however, proved vain: Copplestone had his own reasons for not choosing, at this moment, to offend the troop of Captain Butler, therefore the lad must die, without his interference to save him. Dame Gee, instead of sorrowing as a mother at the approaching hour, determined to prepare for it with the malice of a fiend, by making it one of a deep and signal revenge. Over the immediate authors of his death she had no power, but over the fate of the man who could have saved him, and would not do it, she had much; and it was but to watch her opportunity to use it effectually, as she thought, for his ruin. After having fulfilled her promise to Gertrude by despatching a messenger to the glen with the letter, she lingered at Warleigh for the rest of the day; a thing not unusual with her, after having held an interview with its proprietor respecting his fortunes.

It was towards evening, on this eventful day, when Copplestone, after having despatched one or two of his people with letters in different directions, and with a mystery that characterised all his actions, whilst returning to his own chamber, met Amias Radcliffe, who drew back to let him pass on. He looked on his godson with a stern and lowering expression, as he bade him "go on to the chamber, for he wished to speak a word with him." Radcliffe obeyed in silence.

"So, sir," said Copplestone, in a tone that was peculiarly bitter—"so, sir, you are busy to-day, it appears; and that idleness which, generally speaking, makes the sum of the employment of your time, seems to be exchanged for an active, meddling, and prying curiosity. This is the third time I have this day detected you intruding on the privacy of my apartments. You have been questioning my people, too, I find; and whispering also with my daughter. I marked you; it did not escape my eye. For what purpose did you so? Mistress Gertrude has formerly been little honoured by your attentions, that you should, all at once, grow into confidence with her. I will know the matter of it."

"Sir John Copplestone," said Radcliffe, "I am not your servant, nor your slave, that the most indifferent action of mine should be called to an account, as if I were harbouring

treason against you. You have of late treated me with more than usual harshness; and brief as the time is that remains for me to be under your guardianship and roof, I shall make it shorter. I intend to leave your house, and to remove from your presence an object so hateful to you as myself, for I am here used worse than your very dogs; since, though they bear your stripes, they have their wants, such as their natures demand, supplied to them in due proportion, whilst I am denied the most ordinary things necessary to mine."

"Have you done, sir?" said Copplestone.

"No, Sir John," continued Radcliffe, "I have not done. You keep me penniless, whilst you receive and manage all my means. I must not move, nor ask a question in your household, though it be but to demand the time of day, without suspicion; all liberty of action is denied me, and on every occasion you seek, like the wolf in the fable, to find a cause of quarrel with me; your purpose for aught I know, may be as wicked. These things have made me resolve on quitting you. I can but starve out of doors, though I doubt not I shall find friends to lend me some means of support till I can lawfully claim—as, trust me, I shall do—a full account of what is my own."

"Of what is thy own, rash boy!" said Copplestone; "what is thine will be soon told down—a prodigal's portion, such as a prodigal father left to a beggared son."

"It is false!" exclaimed Radcliffe: "I will not hear my father's memory thus slandered, and by you: my father was a gentleman noble in word and action; the blood which filled his veins was alike ancient and well derived; nor did he ever disgrace it by any act that shewed he had degenerated from his ancestors. He was unfortunate, and in nothing so much, perhaps, as his connexion with yourself."

The countenance of Copplestone grew dark as night at hearing these words. "Your father was like yourself," he replied, "daring and unthankful. The remnant of his bankrupt estate I saved from total ruin to serve his worthless son; to whom, in the weakness of pity, and in order to repair his injured fortunes and his fallen name, I offered my own daughter—the heiress of Warleigh—but my offer was rejected."

"Say rather," exclaimed Radcliffe, with great warmth, "you offered her to the heir of Warleigh! for in the sight of God I am such, though you juggled my father out of his ancient inheritance, by taking it as a mortgage from him, to serve him in friendship; and that, too, at a time when he suffered from those very necessities your own villany had

helped to bring upon him. Treat me well, or I know not but I may yet stir to make good my claim."

To describe the countenance of Copplestone on hearing these threats of his justly incensed godson would be impossible. He appeared suddenly possessed as with the spirit of a fiend; his passions knew no restraint; and though the violence of them for a moment rendered him incapable of speech, yet his eyes glowed like lighted brands, and every muscle of his face was in action—so diabolical was the malice that stirred up in his soul every latent feeling of hatred, jealousy, and suspicion.

"Thou the heir of Warleigh!" he said; "thou claim what is mine, by forfeit mine on a just debt! and far short in payment of that debt, had it been claimed to the full amount. Thou do this! Thou, a poor, beggared, insolent boy! Thou art heir to nothing but thy father's sins, and, may be, to his fate, if the Lord gives thee up as he did thy father!"

"To thy hands to be dealt with!" said Radcliffe, who in the extreme degree of just resentment that he felt at this moment, on hearing his father's fate thus barbarously named, forgot all his predetermined prudence: "I believe it, and that my death would be the surest bond to afford you security in your accursed possession."

Copplestone on hearing this trembled with passion: he set his teeth together, compressed his lips, glanced his eye with the wildness of a maniac, and grasped the haft of his dagger as he turned and confronted Radcliffe. Suddenly he let go the weapon, and raising his clenched hand, struck his godson a blow, accompanying the action with an oath too dreadful to be written down. Radcliffe turned upon him, apparently with the intention to fell him to the ground. But, recollecting himself, by a violent effort at self-command, he forbore, exclaiming, "No! not against the father of Gertrude will I raise my hand, however I may be injured—not against an old man. Sir John Copplestone, this night I leave your house—and for ever. On the day that makes me of age, prepare to render up a full account—trust me, I shall demand it."

Having spoken these few words in a tone scarcely articulate from the struggles of suppressed passion, with a countenance pale as death, he rushed past his guardian, flew towards his own chamber, and prepared instantly to quit the house.

CHAPTER XLII.

Thither full fraught with mischievous revenge,
Accursed, and in a cursed hour she hies.
MILTON.

BEFORE Copplestone could recover from the surprise into which he had been thrown on learning the resolution to quit his house, thus vehemently expressed by his godson, he almost repented that he had driven things to such a pass; for till this hour, though Amias sometimes spoke his feelings, all their quarrels had ended in Sir John coming off the victor; his godson being, generally, brought into that subjection of spirit, which formed no small part of the tyranny so long exercised over him.

Ere Copplestone could resolve how to act, or even before he could move from the spot, Captain Coleman entered, and in a manner that shewed his errand, whatever it might be, was of importance, and demanded haste in its execution. The Captain was fully armed, perfectly sober; and instead of displaying that bold, impudent, and careless air, which he generally assumed as most suited to the gamester and the bully, he appeared with a sullen and resolute expression depicted in his countenance: it seemed to indicate that he had worked himself up to play a part requiring more courage than he could muster, without a strong effort. He put a letter into Copplestone's hand, but did not utter a word.

Sir John seized it eagerly, opened it as fast as his trembling hands would let him, and ran over the contents. As he read, a dark and ominous smile stole over his stern features: it was the smile of satisfied malice; and suddenly looking up, he said to Coleman, in the fanatical language he was often in the habit of using, and chiefly when about to consummate any act of more than ordinary wickedness, "The Lord gave them a king in anger, and took him away in his wrath. All prospers —to-night, so says Colonel Holborn's letter—to-night will they be all given up to us as a spoil. Thou art come for the warrant of arrest," he added, as he went up to the red velvet cabinet, and took from it a paper. "Here is the warrant; the good Colonel would fain have it in his own possession; it is, assuredly, the fullest authority for what he does. I have war-

rants from the council of state for more than one man. Here is that which shall find its way as far as Exeter ere twenty-four hours be past. The instrument which you seek at my hands is to sanction the arrest of the Governor of Plymouth Castle, who had agreed on this night to betray it to the friends of—I say not whom. The light of day fails apace: would I had my lamp. Stay—it is not needful, I can yet see, this is it: here, take it and begone. Give the warrant into no hand but the good Colonel's: and tell him who sent you on with this letter, that when he shall hear the alarm bell ring out from the old tower, then may he advance, for then will be the hour. Dost thou mark me?"

"I do," said Coleman, "and I trust you are well advised, Sir John, and well prepared in what you are about to do; for you will have devils to deal with when the swords are out. I know them all;—they will fight like game cocks, and never give in but by force."

"Numbers shall compel them," replied Copplestone, "and we know that, like as in Joshua's host, the Lord will be on our side and fight for us. Tarry not thou, but begone. I must look to my instructions. As you descend, bid one of my people bring hither my lamp: it is dusk, and I cannot see to read all these papers—they are the council's orders for our full authority in dealing with these men as the necessity of the time or circumstances may require, and as our wisdom shall judge best, even should it be to use summary justice with the conspirators."

Coleman departed; and a servant having brought the lamp as directed, Sir John Copplestone sat down to a table, in order to examine a packet of papers he had taken from the red velvet cabinet, at the time he selected from that depository the warrant he had just delivered to Coleman. No sooner did he now lay his hand on the papers, than he started up, exclaiming, "I have erred, the twilight deceived me, I am a ruined man; I have given the wrong warrant; all will be discovered; the affair will take wind; I shall lose my recompense; our plan will be ruined; and all lost. I must after;—Coleman cannot yet have cleared the grounds."

So saying, Sir John Copplestone, forgetful of all else, forgetful even of the red velvet cabinet that he had left open in his extreme haste, rushed from the room in quest of Coleman, hoping it might not yet be too late to put him in possession of the right warrant to secure the Governor of Plymouth Castle.

Dame Gee saw Copplestone rush down the great stairs, the warrant in his hand, and calling on his servants, might any be within hearing, to run forward and stop Coleman, with all

speed. As if the genius of evil (under whose guardianship Sir John had so long found protection) at this moment deserted him, and left him exposed to all the malice of his enemies, a thought, suggested by the Evil one, at once crossed the mind of Dame Gee, as she saw the precipitancy with which her ancient patron, and now the object of her most determined revenge, had rushed from his chamber in pursuit of Coleman. It was but the idea of the moment: she lost no time, however, in acting upon it; and glided into the chamber of Sir John's secret counsels with all that cool, firm, and collected energy of mind, so necessary to effect her purpose; and though her life should be the forfeit, her resolution was taken to execute it without delay: every instant became precious, for she knew Copplestone would almost immediately return.

The door of the apartment stood open: the lamp was burning on the table; there lay the warrants to sanction treachery and villany to the fullest extent. She never paused to look on these papers: indeed she thought not of them; but glanced her eye on the red velvet cabinet that stood open before her, every drawer and shuttle at her command.

"It is done," said Dame Gee, as, without the pause of even a moment for reflection, she opened the centre drawer of the cabinet, as if she had been as perfectly well acquainted with its intricacies as their iniquitous master himself could be: she drew forth a roll of parchment carefully tied up and endorsed "It is done," she repeated; "Copplestone's ruin is in my hand. My boy will die—but THIS shall revenge him!"

She rushed from the apartment; and knowing every chamber and gallery of Warleigh, she walked boldly forward, neither looked to the right nor to the left, and without the least signal being given to announce her presence, opened Radcliffe's door and stood before him, at the very moment, his hasty preparations being finished, he was about to quit his guardian's roof for ever. Radcliffe's state of mind was not such as to make him look with complacency on any intruder at this instant, and he asked Dame Gee how she dared to thrust herself on him without permission.

"Those who bring good deeds in their hands to win a welcome need ask none," she said; "and I hold one in mine that for you will be the fairest you ever looked upon. Swear to me, that as you hope for happiness in this world, or in that which is to come, swear you will this night spare nor speed nor entreaty to save my poor foolish boy's life; swear this, and I will give you the means to claim, to redeem, to repossess your right, as the true heir of WARLEIGH."

"You are mad, woman," said Radcliffe, "mad, how can I

save your son? He is condemned to lose his life for having killed one of Butler's troopers in the late fray. How can I save him? and what is this you tell me about my being heir to Warleigh? I should have been such I know, had not my father mortgaged and forfeited the estate."

"He did not forfeit it," replied Dame Gee: "I do not say you can save my son; but oh, you may try to do it! and though a miserable creature in the sight of all the world, he is still my son, dearer to my sight than the light of day. He is the child I have borne into life through travail and sorrow; the babe that sucked my breast, and that is as dear to me, even in his folly, as if he had all the finest sense of man. Nay, he is dearer; for like a bird that is nursed with fondness, the weak and frail child is ever the dearest. The constant trouble he has been to me has made him a thousand times more beloved than had he never given me a moment's care; for he was always helpless, and could not have lived to die, as he will die, but for my care. You will try to save him? you know Colonel Holborn—he is Butler's colonel; speak but a word for mercy to him; and, may be, he will spare the idiot in pity to his folly, though he spare him to live in a prison and in chains all the days of his life."

There was feeling, there was even eloquence in the faltering voice, in the asking eye, and in the affectionate manner of Dame Gee, as she pleaded with Radcliffe to endeavour to save her idiot son; so powerful is maternal love that it can animate and soften the hardest breast. The very wolves love their young; no wonder, therefore, that in the heart of a woman, otherwise so barren of all that was good, so stubborn as was Dame Gee's, there existed, nevertheless, that strong and first impulse of nature, wisely implanted by the God of all mercy even in a savage breast; the instinct to cherish, and to feel the tenderness of solicitude to preserve the being she had brought into light and life.

Radcliffe was not unmoved: he told her that he feared his interference would be unavailing; but promised, notwithstanding, to make the attempt to plead for the unfortunate boy. Dame Gee was softened and comforted by this assurance; for though little prone to gratitude, she could feel it at this moment for the man who had consented, if he could do so, to preserve her son.

"The good act," she said, "shall not go unrequited: it shall be rewarded, even before it is done. Take this parchment; keep it carefully: it is the mortgage bond of Warleigh estate, that Copplestone had no right to withhold. I have no time now for further explanation; I must fly this place, else should

he return, and finding me here be led to suspect that I had given to you the deed, he might take my life in revenge, for he knows I have practised what is not warranted by the laws of the parliament, though he has often employed me to do so."

Radcliffe, astonished at what he heard, took the parchments almost mechanically from her; and asked her how she came by them, or by what means she had obtained any knowledge of his father's or his own affairs.

"I have no time to tell all," she said: "there are more papers than this which ought to be yours; yet this is of most value. Have you forgotten the death-bed of your servant Grace-on-high Gabriel?"

"A light seems to break in upon my mind," replied Radcliffe; for at this instant he recollected that Gabriel had long been the confidential agent of his guardian; and the dark hints he threw out when he found himself dying, his broken confession, and many other little circumstances, now recurred to his memory in full force.

"There was," continued Dame Gee, "a horn-box, containing papers and letters in his doublet: you may remember he asked for it; but I had secured it—at that time for a purpose, I confess it to you not without shame, that was to answer an end of my own. Had Sir John Copplestone saved my son, I might—no matter, he did not, would not, consent to save him. I learnt, from those papers of Gabriel, a secret that was of moment; and you owe the parchments which you now hold in your hand to the knowledge so gained by me. Longer I dare not stay. Farewell; I have given you the means to do yourself right, and you have given me the promise to spare me a mother's agony, by endeavouring to preserve the life of my poor son. Away! tarry not here. Farewell; may you be happy."

She hurried from his presence, stole softly but swiftly down the stairs, and left the house by an obscure door that led into the extensive grounds and woods of Warleigh.

CHAPTER XLIII.

——— I part with thee
As wretches that are doubtful of hereafter
Part with their lives, unwilling, loth, and fearful,
And trembling at futurity.

ROWE'S *Tamerlane*

Farewell! God knows when we shall meet again:
I have a faint cold fear thrills through my veins
That almost freezes up the heat of life.

SHAKSPERE.

RADCLIFFE did not long tarry, after the departure of Dame Gee; but unwilling to leave the house without bidding a last adieu to Gertrude, for whom he felt that tranquil but tender regard an affectionate brother entertains towards an amiable sister, he stole softly to the chamber door of her who had been the companion of his infancy, and the friend of his maturer years.

The low knock he gave was answered by a voice that, in tremulous accents, bade him enter. If Gertrude was surprised at seeing Radcliffe (prepared as he was for leaving the house at that hour in the evening), with anger and distress imprinted on every feature of his countenance, he was not less so when he observed the extreme agitation and the pallid looks of his dearest friend.

"Amias," see said, as he entered, with her accustomed warm-hearted simplicity of manner, "do you go forth to-night and leave me, when I am surrounded by so many circumstances of danger and distress? To-night is the meeting of the royalists—you know my fears. You have failed in warning those I could have wished, for their own sakes, to be warned not to come hither." She paused, sighed, and then added, "Had it been any other than my father who had convened the meeting, I would at any risk, I would—but do not ask me what I would have done, or what I have been driven to do from the stern necessity of these times. I have yet hope; I think I have taken the means, the only means, left me to preserve my uncle and his friend, Sir William Bastard. May heaven bless them! for should this last attempt fail, I fear—I will not speak my fears: I can but pray that danger may be averted; for surely my father is moved by some strange passion; I have never seen him before as he has been to-day, in any moments of his anger."

"And his passion towards me, Gertrude," said Amias, "has known no bounds. This night I leave his house for ever. You are surprised, but so it is; do not seek to stay me. I will not shock you by repeating what has passed: but I must leave him. I must quit Warleigh; else, Gertrude, I may be tempted to forget—if provocation is again used towards me—that Sir John Copplestone is your father; and for your sake, however ill he may have used me, I would spare him, Gertrude; yes, I will spare him, and that when he might least expect me to do so—on the day that shall make me of age. I will not dispute my rights with him, though, provoked by ill-usage, I so far forgot myself this night as to threaten I would do so. No matter, the time for action is not yet arrived; then it is I can be generous, even to an enemy. My guardian has ever been to me stern, severe, and unrelenting—but you are his daughter; and your kindness was a balm to my feelings when I had no other friend in the world but yourself to whom to look for comfort. I can, I will, forgive the father for the sake of the child. Yet I must leave you; or this resolution may not hold good. Farewell, Gertrude, farewell; my more than friend, my sister—for such you have been to me: may God bless and comfort you: think sometimes of Amias Radcliffe; and when you do so, remember that he is to you the same as ever—grateful and affectionate—think of him as of a brother."

"I do think of him as of a brother, and a dear brother," said Gertrude; "and I cannot bear that he should be driven from the house that has sheltered him from infancy. Driven hence, and that by one whose conduct I dare not scan too closely. Oh, Amias, pity me! I would be kind to you; I would beg you to stay for my sake, for your own sake, but that I fear——"

"Fear nothing, at least for me, my dear Gertrude," said Amias. "There wants not many weeks of my being of age, when I must become my own master; and till then I trust I shall find some friend who will give me so much as shelter, and some means of assistance, that it will soon be in my power to repay honourably, as a gentleman should requite all obligations."

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Gertrude, "are you going from us, then, without the certainty of finding a home to receive you, and penniless? This is too shocking—it must not, it shall not be: let me be your friend; your sister you have called me, let me be such; and as a sister to a brother in his need, I will supply your present necessity; you shall not ask aid of strangers. Here, Amais, take this purse: nay, take it,

and do not make me suspect that you really think so little of your friend that you would not be obliged to her for a debt of kindness, that affords more satisfaction to her who gives than to him who takes. I am, you know, your sister."

"You are my better angel," said Radcliffe; "I will not refuse your kindness; and most gratefully shall I hail the hour when, returning this present debt, I may have the occasion to requite it tenfold. Is there anything I can do for you? I must not tarry longer; your father's anger, I fear, would be turned on you, if he but suspected I had seen you, or received any assistance at your hand."

"You can do nothing, unless it be—but I ought not to ask it, after what you have told me of the bitter and unfounded jealousies with which my cousin Elford pursues you."

"I heed not his threats," said Radcliffe, "though they have been thrown out even against my life. Tell me what it is you would have of me: I owe all to your kindness; you shall find that I am not ungrateful."

"I would ask," said Gertrude, "if in your way hence you saw any of the royalist gentlemen, even if it be Reginald Elford himself, that you would warn them not to come to Warleigh this night; for nothing can conquer the prepossession I feel, that to come would be at the peril of their lives."

"I will obey you," said Radcliffe: "the evening is growing darker and darker every moment: I will warn any royalists I may chance to meet—even Elford himself; since your kinsman is dear to you, even though he should resent rather than thank me for my interference. Farewell, Gertrude, may heaven bless you!"

"And you, dear Amias," she said, "may we meet in happier and better times hereafter."

"Amen to that wish, my dear Gertrude," he replied; "but there is a weight about my heart this night that I can neither account for nor shake off, which makes me doubt if we shall ever meet again."

"Do not say so," said Gertrude; "though you have known many hardships at Warleigh, yet surely it is but natural you should feel some regrets at leaving, and on such unhappy terms, the place of your birth, your early and your only home. Farewell, I will hope you leave us for happier hours."

"My trust is in God, be the future what it may," said Radcliffe; "for he is the Father of the fatherless; and to him I commit me, be it for good or evil: His will be done. God bless you!"

Saying this, Radcliffe approached Gertrude, pressed her hand to his lips, and looked on her with tenderness, whilst the

tears bedewed his eyes: there was a solemnity in his manner as he took this affectionate leave of his dearest friend, that made a deep impression on her feelings, and was never to be effaced by any after occurrence of her life. She waved her hand—unable to speak more than the simple words, "God bless you, too, Amias!" which shewed how deeply she felt interested in his fate—as if he had really been a brother. In fact, from early habit, and having grown up from infancy together, the regard which subsisted between them was truly deserving the name of fraternal love; it had in it all the tenderness of affection, without the ardour of passion.

On leaving the house Radcliffe pursued his way on foot; for so strict had Copplestone been with his godson, that he could not command even a horse from the stables without his leave, nor was he allowed to keep one that could be called his own. He walked slowly forward, gliding under the shadow of the tall trees that formed the avenue leading to the great entrance.

As he passed the last tree, he saw Copplestone returning swiftly towards the house, after having been in pursuit of Coleman. Radcliffe stood close till he was quite sure his guardian was out of sight, and then continued his way, undetermined how to act, or where to go till the morning, when he had some thoughts of setting forward to Exeter, to consult with a person he knew there (who was considered skilful in the law) as to what measures he ought to take on coming of age, to bring his avaricious and unkind guardian to a just and equitable account.

The lateness of the hour, and the lowness of his spirits, prevented Radcliffe from thinking of going far that night. He also recollected Gertrude's last charge to him; and knowing how much the Widow Raleigh, from motives of humanity, had favoured the distressed royalists, it now first occurred to him, that if he hastened on to her, she might have it in her power to be of some use on the present emergency: at all events, he would call and see her, and then determine to act as circumstances might concur to render it advisable to trust her or not at such a moment.

This resolution taken, he proceeded towards Tamerton, and soon came within sight of the church that stood, in the dusk of evening, looking dark and gloomy against the sullen and lowering sky, that seemed to threaten a storm. Even at this hour, and in the midst of the many cares and anxieties that oppressed his heart, Amias could not look on the old church without remembering, that within the churchyard, beneath a stately tomb, reposed the ashes of his father! His

father! a thousand thoughts rushed into his mind, and swelled his heart, as he dwelt on the remembrance of him who had once borne so dear a name.

In infancy, when he looked in that parent's face, he had witnessed its joy or sorrow too often to forget it, as he sat on his father's knees in Warleigh halls, and experienced that tenderness of affection which had ever marked the conduct of Sir Walter Radcliffe towards his son. When a child, too, he had seen him shed many and bitter tears for his mother's death, as the widowed father would clasp Amias, the only surviving pledge of her affection, to his bosom. He remembered how often Sir Walter had himself administered to his childish wants, or his childish amusements. He recollected him also on his death-bed; the last cold kiss which pressed on his infant lips had conveyed that chill to his young heart that first made him sensible of pain, and left an impression of undefinable terror, never to be forgotten, till he likewise, should become the tenant of the tomb.

These mingled recollections of tenderness and sorrow, prompted a strong desire in the bosom of Radcliffe to visit the churchyard before he left the neighbourhood on so uncertain a date of return. With hasty steps he advanced towards the place where stood the monument that covered the vault in which his father had been buried. He wished no eye to witness the visit he now paid to the spot; for the feelings of pious regret entertained towards the dead, by those of a delicate mind, are generally of a nature which shuns the eye of ordinary observers. They court the loneliness and the silence of sorrow, that loves to commune with the heart and be still.

Such were Radcliffe's feelings; and as he approached the tomb, he looked round to see that no one observed him. He was, however, observed, and that attentively, by a man wrapped in a cloak, who had stolen so cautiously on his steps that he had no suspicion such an intruder was near him, till his eye gave him the first intimation of it.

Radcliffe, on the first glance, fancied there was something in the height and air of the figure that reminded him of Reginald Elford. Could it be Elford? He felt doubtful; and unwilling to commit himself, or to betray Gertrude's warning unnecessarily to a stranger, he walked on towards the Tamerton oak that stood without the churchyard, pondering in his own mind what he should do for the best. The figure followed him, as he paused beneath the oak. What ensued will be told in due place and time; at present we must turn to other matters, that demand our more immediate attention.

CHAPTER XLIV.

Oh, what a world is this, when what is comely
Envenoms him that bears it!
I overheard him, and his practices.
This is no place, this house is but a butchery;
Abhor it, fear it, do not enter it.

SHAKSPERE.

It was on the afternoon of the twentieth day of June that, whilst the poor Widow Raleigh was busied in her usual household affairs, she was surprised by a visit from no less a person than Trim Foretop, the honest barber, who is already known to the reader.

There was in the countenance and demeanour of Trim a more than ordinary expression of importance, not unmingled with a seriousness which seemed, like to a "titled volume," to tell the news he had to convey was of a nature at once eventful and dismaying. His first action was to close the cottage door that he had found open; his next to raise hands and eyes, as he looked upon Mistress Raleigh, exclaiming, "As you love life, good widow, quit your house this night, or the Lord help you from cucking stool and fagots! I've never paused, nor stopped, nor so much as took breath on the road, till I got here to tell you so."

"To tell me what?" inquired Mistress Raleigh, exceedingly alarmed at the manner and words of the barber. "Who would seek to harm so poor, and, I will say it, so inoffensive, a person as myself. Whom have I provoked?"

"The devil, they do say, Mistress Raleigh, to give you up; but I say it is the devil's dam rather. Captain Doll, and the town constable, and a guard of troopers, will be here before night. I heard the news in my own shop. All news comes to the barber's you know. Before night, as I said, you will be taken up, secured, and lodged in gaol, under the heavy and most terrifying charge of witchcraft."

"Of what?" exclaimed Mistress Raleigh, justly surprised at hearing so unexpected an accusation: "this must be some mistake; the tale is too absurd to be credited; everybody knows that I am the widow of a clergyman; my husband was one of the chaplains to King Charles."

"No matter for that, Mistress Raleigh," said Trim; "more

likely to come under suspicion. A clergyman's widow may be as easily charged with being a witch as a clergyman with being a wizard: don't you remember how the godly took up, misused, and imprisoned the Reverend Doctor Atwell? Wherefore did they so? because, forsooth, he kept a black cat in his study; made curious notes on the motions of the moon and stars, and cured many of the plague without catching the disorder himself; and so he suffered for being suspected of having done good by the power of evil. I see you look as if you doubted all I say; but for all that, I'll tell whatever I know as quick as may be. Do but give me a cup of cider, for running and fearing are both things that make a man's blood in a fever."

Mistress Raleigh complied with Trim's request, who, after having satisfied his thirst, thus told his story: "You must have heard, Mistress Raleigh, that these rascally puritan rebels in parliament—I speak my mind freely and honestly to you, as I do to all persons whose opinions agree with my own—sent out one Master Matthew Hopkins, a witch-finder, acting under commission for the parliament, and sent out to search for, harry, smoke, and burn all women, old or young, who have not wit enough left in them to cheat the devil after having done his work. I say, did you ever hear of such a man?"

"Hear of him!" exclaimed Mistress Raleigh: "alas! I remember but too well a poor old creature, who, on account of extreme age, distress, and poverty, and having lost both her sons in the civil wars, became irritable and cross-grained in her temper, and would sometimes vent her humours on her neighbours. For these crimes she fell a sacrifice to Hopkins; though many thought the real cause was that she had given offence by harbouring a royalist—a gentleman who had been most active in the service of the king."

"And that's your offence, Mistress Raleigh, my life upon it," said Trim. "Now, mark me. Dolly Summerfield, her they call Captain Doll, was once engaged with Hopkins and Sterne in the trade of witch-finding, but Dolly soon dissolved partnership; for whilst she hallooed on the hounds, and beat up the bushes for game, Hopkins, who ever came in at the death, generally managed to fatten and batten on the victim, so that Doll had little more than the pleasure of doing mischief for her reward, a requital which, it is said—no offence Mistress Raleigh—most women think the sweetest part of payment. Dolly, however, liked something that was more substantial, though one would think she could scarce find it so much to her taste; and so, being dissatisfied with Master Hopkins, she

left him, and shortly after, falling in with Captain Butler, she did the devil's work in another line, and turned army preacher in favour of the rebellion."

"And what has all this to do with me?" inquired Mistress Raleigh.

"Why, nothing more," answered Trim, "than that Captain Doll, thinking her old trade may help her new one, and having an especial spite against you, because you refused to let her take shelter in your cottage the day of Tamerton revels, whereby the boys held good their purpose of making her ride to water—why, I say, from one and all these things, Dolly Summerfield, or Captain Doll, has entered and sworn a charge of witchcraft against you, Mistress Raleigh; but it is chiefly suspected, so at least was it whispered in my shop, that your main offence is that of having helped to hide, conceal, and abet, more than one noted royalist. It is shrewdly suspected that the purpose of all this is nothing else than by laying you up in limbo, on such an accusation, and keeping your child apart from you, to terrify and to get you to confess what you know about certain royalists, against whose persons and devices the council of state have an especial wrath."

Mistress Raleigh became exceedingly agitated: she well knew that she had assisted many of the distinguished royalist gentlemen in their concealment and escape; and though she would rather die than become a traitor to them, yet the thoughts of being held a prisoner, of being separated from her child, were almost more than she could bear; yet where to go, or where to seek for shelter and relief, she knew not; and she now anxiously inquired of Trim "what possible shadow of proof Dolly Summerfield could adduce in support of her ridiculous charge of witchcraft?"

"Proof!" replied Trim; "proof is not required, nothing but an oath is necessary in such matters, and that I will warrant she will not spare in her charge against you, for her hate seems most deadly. But she does tell a tale, and has sworn to it, about seeing you enter Tamerton church at night about one o'clock in the morning; that you had a strange figure with you, wrapped in a large cloak, and strongly suspected to be a sister witch; that each of you carried a broomstick, and smelt of sulphur and brimstone. And she farther deposes, that she saw a light burning in the tower of the church where you entered; and that after dancing round an open grave, you were soon joined by the Evil one himself, who came to you in the figure of an old man with red horns. You next proceeded to rifle coffins, pick dead men's teeth out of their skulls, steal winding-sheets, and cut shrouds into threads,

and all for your own cursed magical rites. And this being done, the devil, yourself, and your companion, all at once vanished bodily, old Beelzebub being seated on a flying horse, that sent forth smoke and flames from his mouth and nostrils, and left a blight and blast on every tree, shrub, and green thing that was near him. This is only part, and not the worst part, of Captain Doll's deposition sworn to against you. You know how far this statement is true; though I must say, Mistress Raleigh, I don't believe one word about it; and so I came here to warn you; for who knows but what your very life may be in danger? Captain Doll spares nobody against whom she takes a spite."

Mistress Raleigh became exceedingly anxious; for well did she now remember, that on the night she had guided Gertrude Copplestone to assist Sir Marmaduke Elford's escape, when he was concealed in the church, she had been alarmed by a shadow as of a human figure, which she endeavoured to hope, at the time, might be nothing more than an illusion of her own fancy. She now felt convinced she had been an object of suspicion, and was, therefore, watched for the sake of being betrayed, under the colour of a cruel and sanguinary law. One of the most striking features in the unrelenting spirit which distinguished the fanatics of the day was a firm conviction—and they acted upon it with rigour—that the laws and precepts of the Israelites, whilst under the direction of Moses, should be followed in all after ages of the world; and that Christianity, so far from superseding the ancient laws of the Jews (in many instances adapted as they were to the climate of the East as well as to the people), was to be held even as secondary to them. Hence arose their puritanical and rigid observance of the Sabbath; their considering that the crimes of idolatry and witchcraft should be visited with death in its most cruel form, even that of burning at the stake.

Knowing the wicked spirit that was abroad, and that from the circumstance of her having assisted the royalists she stood in danger of her life, even if she should escape the charge of dealing in forbidden arts, Mistress Raleigh, whilst thanking honest Trim for the timely warning he had conveyed to her, did not hesitate to tell him her fears and her uncertainty as to where she could fly for shelter at such a moment. She had but one faithful friend who could help her, and he lived in Plymouth; how could she get there with a hope of safety?

"Not to be thought of, Mistress Raleigh," said the barber: "you might as well hope to escape unhurt by passing through the burning flame of the fagots, as hope to escape unharmed

by going through Plymouth. Think again: are you quite sure you have no friend? no poor cottager, no small farmer, no fellow-wanderer in trouble? Rather than stay here and be trapped, I would counsel you to saddle the ass and take what you can with you, and set your little girl upon the beast before you, and so sally out and take your chance on the moors; for if the worst comes of it, you can but fall among thieves, and that you are sure to do if you remain here; and murderers perhaps to boot."

Mistress Raleigh started at hearing the words "fall among thieves," and she received the intimation they conveyed as the suggestion of heaven itself to her at this moment.

"Yes," she said, "I do know one honest thief, strange as it may sound in your ears to hear me say so. I have no time to tell you the particulars, though you have merited my fullest confidence. But I do believe the man I have thought upon may be trusted. I was charged to seek him in the hour of my need—surely that hour is come; and I was further charged to name to no one my place of flight, and to bring no one with me but my poor child. It may be a hazardous attempt; yet what can I do? To stay here is certain ruin; and I have no other place of refuge."

"Seek it by all means," said the honest barber; "seek it, for there's hope anywhere in a fire, when you are once out of the house that's burning about your ears. I'll give you what help I can for half an hour; saddle the ass for you myself; see all ready, and leave you to set off at dusk, as the safest hour to begin your journey. There'll be a fine moon up to-night, as round and as full as a cheese; and God guide you through a good way, and make it a safe one, for your sake, and for the sake of the dear little poppet."

"Thank you for the kind wish, Master Foretop," said Mistress Raleigh, as she commenced her few but necessary preparations for leaving her cottage in so hurried and distressed a manner. Trim gave her all the help he could; and thus ran on as he did so, for he used to say his hands could never work without his tongue helping them; and this he repeated once or twice as he now tied up two or three bundles into which the widow had hastily crammed whatever she possessed most useful and valuable.

"Well, now, these are odd times," said the barber, "always changing like the fashions of a court beard; and abuses growing up as fast as the hair on a man's chin; that if it be trimmed to-day, sprouts out again to-morrow, and becomes stubborn, as I may say, under the very razor. Well, and so these rebels say it's all for religion's sake that they are letting loose the

devil among us. Why, I say, when things like these come to pass, it 's time for me to sharpen my wits as well as my razors; for no man 's safe if he should happen to remember one good old lesson, that in my young days used to be taught to a child as soon as its name—Fear God, and honour the king."

Mistress Raleigh now made an effort to check Trim's loquacity, and to hasten her preparations.

"You say well, good widow," he replied, "'t is time to be gone: saddle the ass? O yes, I 'll saddle him for you immediately. The little girl—O yes, the pretty little girl—will ride before you like a fairy. You 'll see to her whilst I see to the beast; and then I 'll bid you a good-bye; for my staying here can do you no good, and might do myself harm. And be sure, Mistress Raleigh, before you sally out to begin your journey, be sure you first send forth your little Mary to peep about and see that the coast's clear: she 's sharp enough to keep a good look out; and so may God speed you and give you a safe journey."

Trim Foretop having saddled the ass, and Mistress Raleigh having completed all her hasty preparations for leaving her own home, the good-natured barber took his leave; and the unfortunate widow only waited till the hour of evening, in the hope that the dusk would offer her more security in her retreat than she could expect to find in the broad eye of day.

CHAPTER XLV.

Though in the trade of war I have slain men,
Yet do I hold it very stuff o' the conscience
To do no contrived murder.

SHAKSPERE.

DURING the interval, Mistress Raleigh felt a degree of courage and composure which enabled her to meet her coming trial with every energy that was necessary to go through with it. If she had an anxiety it was about her child. For herself, though not ignorant of the real dangers by which she was surrounded, yet her trust in Divine Providence gave her strength to view them without that fear which incapacitates the mind for action in those moments when its firmness is most needed.

Her real cares, therefore, she cast upon God, and for ideal ones, she had them not. She had good sense, and was of a calm, tranquil nature: but Mistress Raleigh was neither an imaginative nor a nervously sensitive person; consequently she had no terrors of her own creation to surround with their shadowy forms the path of real difficulty that lay before her. So sudden had been this alarm that she had no leisure to arrange anything like a plan for her future conduct. She had learnt that her life was in danger—a life, unhappy as it was, prized even by her, when she knew how necessary was its preservation to the welfare of her child, as suffering had rendered her mind familiar with the thoughts of death; so that for herself she did not fear to face it: but to leave her innocent girl without a friend or protector was a thought that made her determine to endure any misery with patience; so true is it that long suffering will blunt the terrors of the grave, but seldom renders callous the tender affections of the heart.

Though from the extraordinary conduct of the robber, who had spared her whilst he rifled Captain Coleman, she could not but entertain a strong hope that he would, indeed, befriend her in her distress, yet her thoughts of him were not unaccompanied with terror. That she (the widow of Doctor Raleigh, a man of piety and worth) should be placed in such a situation as to fly for succour to a robber, one avowed such, even by his own confession, was a thing not only degrading to her own station, but repugnant to her feelings; it was also danger-

ous, since it might render her suspected, and, in some measure, guilty in the eye of the law, by thus seeking and associating with a person liable to its penalties.

Yet, what could she do? she must seek this man or fall into the hands of a fanatical and infuriated enemy. "There is," said Mistress Raleigh, after having turned over all these points in her own mind,—"there is much truth in the old proverb—of two evils choose the least. I must now make my election, for there is nothing else I can do; and for the rest I must trust to Him who is pleased to try me, for the safety and deliverance of myself and of my poor fatherless child. Here, Mary, dearest; go forth, my darling, and trip down as far as the oak, and look around you very carefully, and see who is about. If there is no one—and all, now, seems pretty quiet—we will mount Dobb's back, and set forward, my dear, on our journey. But be sure, Mary, not to tell any one that we are this night going from home. There, kiss me, sweet, and go and do as I bid you."

The child, though young, was remarkably intelligent; and having been often employed as a messenger to carry assistance to the royalists, she learnt a degree of prudence and caution that could scarcely have been expected from one of her tender years.

It was now getting dark; and though not a breath of air stirred, nor a leaf moved upon the trees, yet the close heated atmosphere, and the dusky red that discoloured rather than gave beauty to the summer evening sky, as well as every now and then a sound being heard as of distant thunder amongst the hills, all portended a coming storm. This added to the distress of Mistress Raleigh, for she felt particularly anxious to set off on her journey, and to reach the vale of Lidford before midnight. Her anxiety to do so was the greater, because the directions she had received from her unknown friend had been so exceedingly vague and uncertain, that even should she reach the glen in safety, she must trust to fortune, or rather to Providence, for help when she should arrive there. She felt surprised that little Mary did not return so quickly as she expected; and had some thoughts at last (so much were her fears excited) of running the risk to go out herself and look for the child. She delayed her purpose a few minutes, in consequence of recollecting that possibly, from the shrewd sense of the girl, if she had seen any one about, she might be induced to linger to watch their movements, or to avoid any suspicion of her being on the look out by making a too hasty retreat.

The little girl, however, still delayed; and just as Mistress

Raleigh's fears had so far overcome all else that she was determined to seek her daughter at any risk, she was prevented by an alarm the most distressing to the feelings of such a mother. The child rushed at once into the cottage, pale, breathless, trembling in every slender joint, and, as she held out something in her hand that she had brought home with her, exclaimed—"Oh, mother, I have seen it!" and dropped down senseless at her parent's feet.

Mistress Raleigh, with that presence of mind which never deserted her, now used every means to restore her child to sense and animation. She succeeded; and as soon as the sobbing, trembling, and still alarmed little creature could tell her tale, she repeated, in a few words, a circumstance so terrific, to which it had pleased God to make her a witness, that on hearing it the miserable mother became almost as lost as the child had been but a few minutes before. Her maternal feelings, however, instantly caught the alarm; and convinced from what she had just heard that her child's life would now, very possibly, be in greater danger than her own, she lost not an instant in preparing for her departure.

She secured her small package of necessaries on the ass, placed her child upon the saddle, and taking the bridle in her own hand, determined herself to walk by the side of the beast as far as she could, lest the animal should become tired by a double burden, and so refuse to continue its journey. She prayed mentally for God's blessing and support in this distressing hour, as, leading forward the ass, and every now and then whispering a word of comfort or bestowing a kiss upon her poor little girl, she set out towards the glen of Lidford. Nothing was now left to her, saving the child of her bosom, and her trust in Him who had promised to defend the cause of the widow and the fatherless; even at this moment she felt a strong assurance in that promise, and she was comforted.

In less than an hour after Mistress Raleigh's departure the evening became exceedingly dark; for the sun having long since set, and the moon not yet being fully risen, dense masses of clouds were so collected together that they shrouded the sky like a mourning mantle. Whilst the obscurity of the hour had rendered a summer's evening in June thus dreary, a light was seen to advance not far from Tamerton church, along the pathway that led directly to the door of the cottage from which Mistress Raleigh had so lately fled.

The little party (for it was but a small number of persons, to guide whom the foremost who acted as leader, carried a lantern,) proceeded with some caution: it consisted of the town constable of Plymouth, the noted Captain Coleman, two

or three troopers, and the no less famous Captain Doll, who, having sworn to the deposition against Mistress Raleigh as a witch, had proved herself to be no conjuror, since, in chattering about her own intentions to head the party who were to execute the justice's warrant now in the hands of the constable, she had afforded the gossips an opportunity of repeating the whole affair in the barber's shop; and we have seen how Trim Foretop employed the information thus timely gained to save the poor widow from certain destruction.

As they now advanced, Captain Doll, it appeared, did not carry on her measures with that degree of silence and caution which Captain Coleman seemed to think prudent, if not absolutely necessary; for swearing a good round oath, in terms not over courteous, he asked if she could not hold her tongue for ten minutes till the business was done.

"Hold my tongue for ten minutes!" exclaimed Captain Doll, as she set her arms a-kimbo, and paused a moment, exceedingly offended by the oath and the expressions which her volubility had provoked from the endurance of the patient Captain Coleman. "I'll not hold my tongue for ten seconds, let alone minutes, when there is so much cause to lift up my cry in the wilderness, and to testify against such scoffers, and swearers, and scorners, and red-nosed disorderly walkers as you are, in the land."

"That's right," said Captain Coleman, treating with high contempt the abuse of Captain Doll; for though on the whole they were excellent friends, yet there were moments when drink, petulance, or a more than ordinary pouring-out of the spirit of fanaticism set them quarreling, as on the present occasion. "That's right, rant and scold away to your heart's content; a woman's tongue makes no wounds that can be seen, and a brave man only laughs at them. Dolly Summerfield, I forgive you, for your lips and the aqua-vitæ bottle have kissed each other much too often this evening; the brain has got warm as the flagon got cool."

"You are drunk, yourself, to say so, you godless, saucy jack, you," exclaimed the military virago: "woe unto them that follow strong drink, and continue with wine until night to inflame them. Yea, woe, says Solomon, and woe, say I, for drink makes the heart send out crooked things. I know you, Captain Coleman; for, as the prophet says, your very image is an ale post; for if men do but seek you at home, where are you to be found? not there, but at the Red Dragon, I trow. Where's your sense? where's your wit? Drowned at the Red Dragon. Where's your money? Marry, in the dragon's claws. Where's your temper? Truly in the dragon's

blood. And where will be your soul, as the end of all these things? Why, of a verity, in the bottomless pit, where the red dragon himself lies in flames, with all witches, idolaters, and ——"

"And lying jades such as you," said Coleman, in great wrath.

"Truly," snuffled the constable, who was a high Calvinist, and had a most oratorical twang in the nose—"truly, it becomes not the elect to quarrel among themselves, but rather to make war on Gibeon together: we are here in search of the abomination of desolation, as I may say; for what is more abominable than a witch? or should be more desolate than her dwelling? We should raise hand and voice in sweet harmony together, to put her out of the land."

"I do raise my voice," cried Dolly, "and will take up my song, and it shall be a song of cursing even from morning until night; and I will keep it up even when the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fail: for a witch is a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer."

"Or an old woman on a broomstick," cried Coleman, "who flies through the air like a lapwing, if all that's spoken be true; and you are like enough to give her warning to be off, for here we are, hard by the oak tree, and if you will keep up this bawling—why, now do hold your tongue."

"I will not hold my tongue," cried Doll, "when it is as a trumpet against iniquity: as well might you attempt to stop the cry of blood when it cries out from the very earth."

"Hey! what have we here?" exclaimed Coleman, as his foot stumbled against something. "Here, Tom, constable, man; turn hither thy lantern, and let us see what lies under the oak—a man, I think, dead or drunk; or, may be, both—dead-drunk. Why, up, friend; up, I say: canst not answer? Nay, then I must question you with my halbert. But first let's look at thy face—canst not speak for thyself?"

A deep groan was heard at this moment. "God of mercy!" cried the constable; "that speaks, and a terrible word—look! the man hath a wound in his back. Some coward hand dealt that blow: he is murdered!"

"Help me to raise his head," said Coleman; "hold the light to his face—surely I should know him. It is—yes, surely, God of heaven—it is Master Amias Radcliffe! Here, help, run, fly to the nearest cottage; bring aid, call up all you meet. This is a gentleman, and one who is much valued by those high in power."

"Undo his doublet—cut his band strings; I will tear up my

gown to stanch the blood. Oh, that I had but a bottle of rosa solis! Can you speak, sir?" continued Dolly, who really felt something like pity for a fellow-creature in such a state. "Can you but say who did it? Speak."

"Speak!" cried Coleman; "no, never will he speak again in this world; he is bleeding to death: there is not half an hour's life in him. There is a stab in the chest, too; look, he presses his hand upon his breast: who did it? Speak the word, Master Amias; say who brought you to this pass, if you can speak;" and swearing a tremendous oath, he added, "if the murderer walks the earth in the shape of man, I swear he shall account for it with the last drop of blood that fills his veins. Who struck you?"

It seemed as if the unfortunate Amias Radcliffe, though speechless and expiring, yet nevertheless, understood what was said to him. Propped up in the arms of Coleman—as Dolly Summerfield endeavoured to stanch the blood that issued fast from his chest, and the constable held the light to her that she might see to do it—Radcliffe looked up earnestly, and fixed his eyes on Coleman. They were filled with water: his lips moved, but no voice came. His features were sunk, and the muscles about the face twitched convulsively; every feature wore the marble hue of death.

After vainly essaying to speak, the unfortunate young man made one last effort: it was probably to recommend his soul to God; for, pressing his hands feebly together, his eyes became raised, and the lips were slightly in motion. In a few moments he seemed to be lost to all around him: his hands dropped heavy and motionless by his side—the dreadful death-rattle was in his throat, a slight groan announced the parting pang, and he fell backwards on the earth, his eyes open, but fixed and glaring, with all that terrific and repulsive expression which the human eye invariably possesses when its light is quenched in death, and it is no longer as the index to those beautiful changes of feeling and of thought that raise man above every other created being. No part of the body decays so quickly as the eye, because it is the immediate organ of the soul: the soul is to it as the sun to the earth; its beams give it light and lustre, and when that is set, it falls at once into darkness and to night.

Thus died, in a manner as mysterious as it was dreadful, Amias Radcliffe—a young man though guided by mistaken notions of public spirit into many acts of disloyalty, yet one who, nevertheless, possessed a mind that was the very temple of truth and honour, and a heart full of the most kind, affectionate, and generous feelings. Yet thus he died: God per-

mitted him to fall by so fearful an end; nor must we attempt to scan His providence.

There is no lesson like death: even the infamous woman and her hardened associates, who now witnessed the last moments of Radcliffe, were moved by them. They stood for some moments in silence looking upon the dead: a fearful example was, indeed, before them, to alarm and awaken conscience; for if the sight of a sudden and violent death cannot do it, nothing will; and the sinner so warned, if that warning be vain, generally falls into worse courses, and becomes altogether reprobate.

It is nature's law that man is appointed once to die, yet the world never fails. Man in his generation frets himself in vain: he is like the restless wave that beats against the shore; but whose impotent agitation no more affects the body of the mighty ocean, than the death and sorrows of one man affect mankind at large; since the living succeed the dead as regularly as the day follows on the night.

Some thoughts of this description probably passed through the mind even of such a woman as Captain Doll, at this awful moment; for, accustomed as she was to preaching, and familiar with her Bible amongst the godly, she now repeated the beautiful verse from Jeremiah—"The stork in the heavens knows her appointed times; and the turtle, and the crane, and the swallows, observe the time of their coming; but man knoweth not the judgments of the Lord."

Coleman and the constable raised the body, and assisted by some persons they had called to their aid, prepared to carry it to Warleigh.

CHAPTER XLVI.

Till now you have gone on, and filled the time
With all licentious measure, making your wills
The scope of justice; till now, myself, and such
As slept within the shadow of your power,
Have wander'd with our traversed arms, and breathed
Our sufferance vainly.

SHAKSPERE.

We must now return to Gertrude, who, after Amias Radcliffe had bid her farewell, remained in her own chamber in a state of mind that it would be difficult to conceive or to describe, so mixed, so varied, so intense were her feelings; yet all of them partaking of alarm, and but faintly mitigated by any certainty in her expectations to raise or to confirm her hopes. Yet she did hope; and internally prayed the God of mercy that he would that night rescue the poor Royalists who, she had so much cause to believe, were destined to become the victims of treachery in Warleigh's halls. It was now the decline of day; she sat at an open window in her chamber listening attentively to every sound, and watching the least movement without the house. Her room looked towards the river; and though the landscape was shadowed and intercepted by the thick foliage of the massive and lofty trees that skirted its banks, yet, nevertheless, she caught a view, between their openings, of the surrounding prospect, composed as it was of the broad and silvered waters, and hills in the distance, melting, as it were, into the sky as they became obscured and mellowed by the tints of evening.

As the anxious daughter of Copplestone thus sat watching in her apartments, she heard the distant trampling of horses; and soon after several persons, who, it appeared, approached the house with much caution, dismounted and entered the hall in silence. Their numbers gradually increased, till there might be present, in all, about ten gentlemen. Sir John Copplestone advanced to receive them. There was a stillness about the meeting, a solemnity in the manner of all present, that seemed to tell the purpose which thus caused these gentlemen to assemble together with so much caution was of high import.

In the more retired and obscured parts of the hall every object was indistinct and sombre; whilst a partial light from

the departing sun streamed through the windows, and its rays darted on the group of figures now seated round the long oak table in the midst. Large apartments, whose proportions and architecture are of the Gothic ages, create awe when viewed at such an hour: their height, the blackened beams and overhanging arches of their carved ceilings, the heaviness and gloom of their vast chimneys (when no fagot is blazing to give light and life to the empty space), the tall shafted windows, and the strong and broad character of the shadows that hang about the old walls, all contribute to produce that solemn and pensive feeling which vastness, antiquity, and the fading light of day never fail to create in minds not insensible to the witching power of imagination, and the pictures she calls up at such a time so vividly before her view.

The strong and partial illumination, such as we have described, which sent its glowing light through the windows of Warleigh halls, shewed distinctly the features of all who were present. There might be seen the noble and frank expression, not unblended with some degree of haughtiness, that distinguished the countenance of Sir Piers Edgcumbe, for he was of the assembly.

There also was seen, the bold, open, and confident brow of Trelawny of Trelawne, in whose veins ran the blood of heroes who had not spared it in the fields of Poitiers and of Cressy; and whose family boasted, with a pride that built itself on honour, of being one of the first who in Cornwall had risen to chase from his usurped throne that cruel tyrant the third Richard.

Colonel Tremaine, too, was present, who, though he had been forced to surrender in the late contest his noble family mansion of Sydenham, after it had held out a long and perilous siege, nevertheless still displayed, with unabated vivacity, the quick determination, the calm courage, and the high courtesy which had ever rendered him deservedly popular as a military officer and a royalist formed to lead, in the most dangerous times, wherever honour and duty pointed the way.

Another person was also there, whose arrival, when it was known to Gertrude, made her heart sink within her, since she was convinced by it that her messenger had not been able to deliver her letter; in short, that the warning had altogether failed. This person was no other than Sir William Bastard, so often mentioned as the peculiar object of Gertrude's more than esteem, and of her father's detestation. The manly beauty of Sir William's countenance was peculiarly prepossessing: it was expressive of high resolution and courage united to the utmost sweetness of disposition. He entertained a

marked abhorrence to every species of hypocrisy; whilst his stern reproval of injustice, his vehement and passionate character (generous even in its very failings), all rendered him a gentleman, young as he was, that everywhere took his place amongst those who lead, and not amongst those who follow. Authority seemed, indeed, so natural to him, that his was generally admitted without dispute. He had been one of the foremost to support the king's cause in the west, and had assisted the valiant old John Arundel in holding out Pendennis Castle (the very last fortress in the kingdom which surrendered to Cromwell), even after the unfortunate Charles had counselled his followers to lay down their arms, and dismiss their garrisons, at the time he was betrayed by the Scots.

There was, too, in the midst of all the energetic and fiery expression that characterised the countenance of Sir William Bastard, a certain gentleness and good humour which spoke a kind and even flexible disposition, in all cases where his high principles of loyalty did not interfere to raise the stormy susceptibility of his soul. Sir William's complexion was that of health; and, seen in combination with his fine dark eyes, and long locks of rich chestnut hair, that hung curling over his shoulders, his head appeared altogether such as a painter would have chosen for the young Apollo, and one that no eye could behold without a feeling of involuntary admiration. His portrait is still preserved at Warleigh; and seems to speak, even at this distance of time, the man born to command, and not to be forgotten in his country's history.

Other gentlemen were present, but none of so much note as those already named; nevertheless all were picked men, if we may use the expression, remarkable for zeal, loyalty, and courage in the cause of the king: not a man amongst them but would have thought his own life a small sacrifice to procure the liberty and safety of his sovereign.

As Sir John Copplestone came forward to receive these gentlemen, he looked as if labouring under some ill-suppressed anxiety, possibly it arose from his conscience; for though practised in blunting its edge, yet there were moments when it spoke to him, in a voice that would be heard; it now told him, as he approached Sir William Bastard, how deadly a sin was the enmity he harboured against him. Be this as it may, no voice of conscience could be powerful enough to shake his purpose when it was once resolved.

The naturally stern expression of his swarthy countenance was unabated, yet every muscle was composed: he bowed and saluted, with grave courtesy, the royalists, as his quick and dark eye shot on each a glance that was at once keen and

penetrating—a glance that seemed as if it would read the inmost thought. This done, his eyes settled on the ground; and if there were any remains of agitation about Sir John Copplestone, that man must be a nice observer who could now detect it, as in no word, no action, could it be remarked, except indeed, that once or twice he moved towards the hall door, without any apparent purpose, as if he had for a moment forgotten himself, and then suddenly returned towards the table; or that he had not immediately heard or understood somewhat that was said to him.

Lights were brought into the hall; and Copplestone ordered wine and refreshments for his guests. We pass in silence the courtesy with which he entertained them. More than an hour elapsed when at length the low, anxious, and often whispering tones with which the gentlemen had conversed together became louder, and the conversation more general than it had hitherto been. All spoke of their long cherished plans; their anxious hopes, that, by Captain Burley's means, the king might escape from the Isle of Wight (possibly he had done so); and even yet, on that very night, would receive the homage of those few of his faithful subjects who were now awaiting his arrival.

"Is there no news from Burley?" inquired Tremaine; "he promised, if alive, that he would meet us to night, and hoped to bring with him the king, to effect whose liberty from Carisbrook Castle a plan was laid, such as Burley thought could not fail, unless there was treachery, and that he did not fear, after all that had been done and sworn to by the persons engaged in the plot. Is there no news arrived yet?"

"None," said Copplestone; "but the hour is not yet come, though it draws nigh. We must be patient, gentlemen. I have sent one to look out and give notice of the approach of the retinue; for Burley agreed to stop at a spot named on this side Plymouth, where certain gentlemen promised to meet the royal fugitive, and to guard him in safety hither. I wonder the varlet I have sent out to watch brings me no tidings: but truly I will send out again; and yet seven times, as Elijah did to look for rain, when there was nothing seen but a little cloud, small as a man's hand in the distance, yet truly it grew into a great mercy; even so, I trust, will our present hope. I will send out another scout: it is strange he tarries thus."

"This delay of Burley's is strange, indeed," said Sir William Bastard: "I trust there is no mistake, no misunderstanding; no treachery. I saw Burley's letter myself: he stated that he had found means to communicate his plan to the unhappy king, who expressed himself overjoyed, and ready to run any

risk to gain liberty. Fear, therefore, on the part of his majesty, cannot be the cause of this delay."

"His Majesty," said Sir Piers Edgcumbe, "was never known to fear, except in trusting to his own counsels; and better for himself and for the kingdom would it have been had he done so; since his own opinions were generally wiser than those of his counsellors, if we except Lord Falkland and Master Hyde. The king is not of a fearful temper: fear, indeed, is a tyrannous ruler, that should ever be the subject and not the master of kings. I trust the king will come to-night in safety; or, if not, that Burley will give some good account as to the cause of this delay, that we may know how to act in regard to our followers."

"But there are more friends expected than those of Burley's party," said Trelawny of Trelawne. "I thought, Sir Piers, you assured us that your honest friend, Sir Hugh Piper, would be here? and that Reginald Elford had promised that his father, Sir Marmaduke, should also come. How is it that these gentlemen are not present?"

"I cannot tell," replied Sir Piers: "indeed I am lost in conjecture when I think of it; unless it be that they will join Burley on the road hither, and so all come together. Possibly it may be so; for, you know, Sir Hugh Piper went to Salisbury expressly to forward the plan and to arrange the different stations, so as to have all in readiness to facilitate the escape. And Sir Hugh promised he would return in time to be here this night; yet neither he nor Sir Marmaduke are come."

"It is strange, indeed, that Sir John Copplestone should have no news from any one," said Colonel Tremaine; and he looked exceedingly grave as he made the observation.

"Or possibly none that he chooses to communicate to us," said Sir William Bastard, as he fixed his eye on Copplestone with a look of mistrust. Sir John did not notice it; for at that moment the trampling of horses was heard in the distance; and as the sounds drew nigh, the earth seemed to shake under their hoofs with a heavy and measured pace. "Ha!" exclaimed Tremaine, "these are not the friends we expect, these are horse soldiery; and, therefore, enemies. What can this be but treachery?"

The gentlemen (thus alarmed by the sudden thought of treachery, that passed from each to each like an electric shock), drew their swords, and sternly demanded of Copplestone, "what this might be?"

Sir John gave no answer, but went towards the hall-door: Gertrude, also, had been startled at the sound. She rushed to the window; and thence perceived, winding through the

avenue, a small troop of cavalry. Though from the gloom of twilight the men, thus armed and mounted on their caparisoned and managed steeds, could not be seen with all that imposing effect which in the broad light of day their order and martial appearance could not fail to excite; yet, even through the dusk, something of their formidable character might be discovered, as, in double files, they drew up before the house, and received the command to halt, given in a low but harsh voice by him who led them forward.

This was followed by a whispering, in tones too indistinct to reach Gertrude's ear; but as the files wheeled round she fancied she heard the order given to place a guard at every entrance and avenue that gave access to the house.

"He is lost!" exclaimed Gertrude, as she sunk down on a chair, after having watched so long to find but this completion of her fears. "Sir William Bastard is lost! May heaven have mercy, for earthly hope there is none; yet I will hear what passes: into the hall I must not go—but the gallery! yes, the gallery, I can glide into that from my own chamber unperceived by any one."

This resolution taken, she stole into the gallery, which partly consisted of a wide platform, or landing-place, at the head of the great stairs: it overlooked the hall. The body of cavalry now arrived were all picked men, chosen for the present service on account of their fanatical zeal, their sour schismatical spirit, and the most deadly hatred to the king and the royalists. Their number was but small, because it was deemed a measure of prudence not to excite any alarm in the neighbourhood by marching a large body of troops towards Tamerton on that evening: and small though they might be, yet were they more than sufficient to master the cavaliers they came to secure as prisoners, taken in holding a meeting treasonable to the parliament and council of state. Such was the event, and such the mean, hypocritical, and Judas-like part Sir John Copplestone had played to draw the royalists into the snares laid for them under his own roof.

CHAPTER XLVII.

Thou think'st I fear thee, cursed reptile!
And hast a pleasure in the damned thought.
Though my heart's blood should curdle at thy sight,
I'll stay and face thee still.

JOANNA BAILLIE.

THE party was headed by Colonel Holborn, a man who served the parliament with a zeal that has immortalised him in the county of Devon; where not a house was beleagured and taken by storm, nor any great act achieved against the royalists, but he could boast of having had some share in the exploit.

Colonel Holborn was tall in stature, of a hardened and saturnine countenance, such as a prisoner would have shuddered to meet in one destined to be his judge: it was no index of mercy. In his dress and manner he had the appearance of a military man. Over his buff coat and steel breastplate he wore a dark-coloured cloak that, in moments of deliberation, it was his custom to draw round before him; and wrapping his arms in its folds he would stand, sentencing for life or death, with as much careless ease as if he were ordering a parade or examining the muster-roll of his troop.

Yet Colonel Holborn was upheld by the godly as one of the most righteous men of his day: if zeal in his profession could constitute the claim, he might, indeed, be such; for he was one of those Independents who would have tolerated the rule of Satan in his own person, rather than that of a bishop of the Established Church, or an elder of the Presbytery. Both were equally abhorrent to him; and devoutly believing, as he did, that the reign of the saints was already commenced upon earth, and that he was himself one of that body, he determined never to hold back till the work he considered them as appointed to do should be fulfilled; and the ruthless manner in which he pursued his career throughout the civil wars, with his contempt of life when exposed to danger, sufficiently proved he was in earnest, when he declared that heaven must be fought for before it could be won, with the carnal weapons of matchlock and sword. The practice of shedding blood after victory, in which he had much indulged, had so hardened his feelings, that mercy had no place in them: he was, therefore,

a chosen man on all occasions where a resolute will and a hard heart were necessary to consummate an act of injustice.

Colonel Holborn entered the hall of Warleigh in a slow and deliberate manner: his heavy boots sounded at every step, as if he would make the very ground feel his authority. In his stern and gloomy eye there was no expression either of fear, anger, or feeling. He could look those he would destroy full in the face, withou tso much as turning aside his eyes even for a moment; a sure sign of a hardened and indelicate mind, that has no sympathy for the feelings of sorrow or of shame, that must, more or less, be the portion of the unhappy sufferers.

The royalists, on the first alarm being given, had started from their seats in astonishment, for they had not immediately felt certain they were betrayed: but the moment they saw Colonel Holborn they knew what must be their fate; all their doubts vanished; they were certainly ensnared. The most impassioned feelings of indignation possessed every bosom, as they attempted a resistance that had in it the fury of despair. The struggle was brief and ineffectual. Colonel Holborn gave the word, and they were instantly overpowered by the troopers, who had rushed into the hall. One soldier, however, who singled out Sir William Bastard, was slain by him in the fray, and whilst at the last gasp, he declared to that gentlemen, "that Sir John Copplestone had set him on to dispatch him (Sir William) during the confusion of the assault."

Copplestone did not hear the dying man's confession, and still eager for the death of his long-detested enemy, he now exclaimed, "Blood has been shed by the wicked; let it not cry from the earth in vain; blood must have blood; it is Scripture."

"Villain!" exclaimed Sir William Bastard, who saw in a moment that the death of this man (though killed by him but in self-defence, for the trooper had aimed a blow to strike him down), was to be seized upon as an excuse to destroy him—"villain, you have betrayed us all! and now would you consummate the act with murder! Take my life; it is not worth asking, if to save it I must sue to thee for mercy."

"Where is the noble Burley?" said Sir Piers Edgcumbe; who, even in these dreadful moments, thought more of the king's safety than of his own: "where is he?"

"In prison," replied Copplestone: "the fool's fate is his; he spread a net for others, and has fallen into the midst of it himself. The king is still a prisoner."

Expressions of the most poignant regret burst from the royalists, as Colonel Holborn, with the sanctified cant that was

for ever on his lips, exclaimed, "He is reserved, may be, as a sin-offering for the iniquities of the land; seeing that he has been the first to lead on the war and to commit folly in Israel."

"And is this the end of all our hopes?" said Sir Piers. "We sought your house, Sir John Copplestone, in good faith, but by your own hearthstone have you betrayed us; and the noble-minded Burley also, by your betrayal, will, I fear, meet a cruel fate."

We shall be avenged," cried Sir William Bastard. "God looks on; he witnesses this infamy; tremble, villain! for justice cannot, will not, fail to reach thee."

"Men without arms kill only with the tongue," said Copplestone: "I leave thee to one who has full power to deal with traitors and manslayers like thyself."

"Gentlemen," said Colonel Holborn, who now turned to address the captive royalists, "I am not here without warrant. Power has been placed in my hands by those who are now the rulers in this kingdom. To me have they deputed it in Devon; even as power was put into the hands of Joseph by Pharaoh when he became a mighty man in all Egypt; and even as Joseph dealt with his unhappy and sinful brethren, so would I deal with you, would you but let me; not requiting your sins with shame, but rather covering you with mercy, if you but return into the right way. I pray you think of this; and as I sit here" (he placed himself at the head of the table, and drew out from under his cloak certain papers as he spoke), "I would beseech you to answer me truly, as honest men should do, to all such questions as I shall propose to you; and fear nothing, for mercy is to be found would you but seek it."

He turned to Sir Piers Edgcumbe. "I begin with you: it is well known that this plot, once more to bring in tyranny and to stir up strife in the land, is not confined to Devon. The Cornish men take part in it, and their plans and measures are well known to you; name but the leading men engaged in such an enterprise in Cornwall, or elsewhere, and life and freedom are your reward. Name but these men who are thus devoted to the cause of Charles Stuart."

"All that respect truth and justice," said Sir Piers, "and all who fear God and honour the king, more than they fear death, or honour prosperity in rebels. You have my answer."

"Must I look for no other?" said Colonel Holborn.

"For none other," said Sir Piers; "should you look till your eyes ache, or till the sun shines out bright enough to shew an honest roundhead."

"Your speech is spoken in scorn," replied Colonel Holborn; "but your king has long sat in the seat of the scornful, and you are of his court."

"And now am I of his captivity," said Sir Piers; "and I am glad that I am found worthy to share it for his sake."

"Colonel Tremaine," said Holborn, "I hope to find you wiser than your friend here in bondage. You are a military man, and should know something of discipline. What arms and what men have the Cornish insurgents prepared for this rising?"

"Arms such as the cause demands, and some thousand honest hands to wield them: any arms will now be turned to account; though they should be no better than pitchforks and scythes, they will help to hew down rebels."

"And you," continued Holborn, addressing Trelawny, "you should know something of these Cornish men?"

"I do," cried Trelawny; "noble and brave they are; they have stood by a Trelawny in many a hard fought field, and will avenge him, as you may find to your cost, when our Cornish yeomen shall hear of this day's treachery."

"And you, Sir William Bastard," said Colonel Holborn, "you who have this day broken the law of God and of the land, you who have taken the life of man engaged in an act of duty, what have you to say to mitigate punishment, and to turn aside wrath due to your offence?"

"I have committed none," replied Sir William. "Sir John Copplestone, well do I know it, thirsts for my blood in the wantonness of an implacable revenge. If to save my life I must sue to him for mercy, I would not spend as much breath as might be necessary to say the word, though it were sure to gain it; so much do I loath the greyheaded hypocrite, grown old in iniquity and not in honour, who could thus betray me and my gallant friends Nor do I admit that he or you have any lawful power to deal with me. I came hither to do service to the King—to whom I am sworn in allegiance; he is still king of England, though in cruel bonds. There is no law to sanction your proceedings, and I will acknowledge no power but such as may be founded on law, or on the authority of my prince."

"The parliament have established a law," said Colonel Holborn, "by which it is made high-treason, in any way, to abet the King without its sanction."

"Oh, most iniquitous are all the acts of that rebel commons," said Sir William: "their men and their measures are alike, for both are leagued with falsehood and rebellion; and we are in the power of a villain who never spared life at the call of mercy or of truth."

"It is justice now demands thine," said Sir John Copplestone; "thou wilt find but the reward of thine own misdeeds."

"Talk not of my misdeeds," said Sir William Bastard. "I know thy enmity, Copplestone, and know its cause. I exposed thy villany, and the frauds thou didst attempt to commit even against thy own wicked masters. But look at home, search thy own heart, and learn that if thou hadst meted out to thee the measure of thy own deserts, the recompense would be such as befits a traitor and a murderer!"

A deathlike paleness overspread the cheek of Copplestone: he trembled in every limb, so much did these words agitate his inmost soul. His eyes glared on Sir William Bastard with an expression of fury that was almost more than human, as he said in a low, bitter tone of scorn, "I answer thee not; Colonel Holborn will deal with thee: thou fool in speech and passion, take thy fate, since thou wilt provoke it."

"Captain Butler," said Colonel Holborn, for that worthy had by this time entered the hall—"Captain Butler, a word in your ear."

The Captain advanced and listened, bowed, and left the hall. "Sir William Bastard," continued the commander, addressing the prisoner, "did you never hear of the fate of Sir Charles Lucas and Sir George Lisle?"

"They were murdered after the taking of Colchester by the rebels," replied Sir William Bastard: "I remember it well."

"They were shot to death on the instant," said Colonel Holborn; "condemned on the double charge of being taken in arms, and as insolent and contumacious to the parliament general, by whom they were made prisoners. Prepare for death, Sir William, for you have incurred the same fate. We give you one hour for preparation. In mercy we grant that, since we would not kill both soul and body for thy crimes. Corporal Hannibal Gammon, conduct Sir William Bastard to the old chapel of this house; there leave him to God and his own thoughts. In an hour see all be ready for his death. May he, ere that, have made his peace with the Judge before whose throne he must this night render up his last account! Carry him hence; not a word will I hear in his favour. Bind his arms—look that he does not escape—your lives shall answer it—away with him."

A cry of horror escaped from the royalists at hearing this summary and cruel sentence, so exactly the counterpart of that by which the unfortunate Sir Charles Lucas and his friend had been condemned to a sudden and violent death. All who were present now spoke in favour of Sir William Bastard, in the hope to obtain for him some mercy, even at the hand of a man so stubborn as Colonel Holborn. But he listened only to a few words spoken by Sir John Copplestone, or rather whis-

pered by that wretch into his ear: "Wherefore spare him an hour? Why not instant execution? Have you forgot, Colonel, what was said by the Earl of Essex in answer to Master Hyde's prayer, that he would interfere to save Stafford's life? 'Stone dead hath no equal, and that as soon as may be.' Marry, there was sense and prudence in that saying."

"I know what I do," replied the Colonel, whispering in his turn; "I do but delay the execution one hour, in the hope that the terror of its approach may move these men to confess (with a view to save his life) whatever they may chance to know of the Cornish plot, now ready to burst over our heads."

"And will you spare him if they do confess?" inquired Copplestone.

"Ay, as Joab spared Absalom," replied Colonel Holborn; "he thrust him through the heart with three arrows, lest one should fail him."

"Good," cried Copplestone: "I will leave you to question these men; they are eager to speak with you. I would not longer tarry, lest I seem a bloody-minded man, who would enjoy the fall of my enemy. Farewell for awhile." Copplestone left the hall.

Tremaine now spoke. "Colonel Holborn," he said, "you are a soldier, and, as such, you should know that it is a generous part, and one which becomes the brave, to spare a fallen foe. Sir William Bastard is a prisoner. Keep him in close confinement if you will; send him on ship-board; banish him; anything you will, but spare his life, lest your own be called upon to answer it hereafter."

"You shall answer it both here and hereafter," exclaimed Trelawny; "as I am a man you shall answer it. Though now in bonds, I am neither faithless nor friendless; and I swear, as there is truth in earth or heaven, this foul deed shall be avenged. Cornwall and Devon will at my word rise to do justice in requital for the wrongs of my friend. Let me go; unhand me, fellow," he continued, as he struggled to free himself from a trooper who held him back; "I will speak, I will be heard; this slaughter in cold blood shall not go forward; he shall not die, as there is a God above us he shall not."

"Think of his youth, of his honourable mind, his gallant spirit. Spare him, Colonel Holborn," said Sir Piers Edgcumbe—"spare him as you would yourself one day be spared. Shew him mercy, ere you ask mercy again of heaven."

"I am not merciless," said Colonel Holborn; "but I must do my duty. If I spare Sir William Bastard, it must be in order to benefit the country. On no other condition can he

not unusual with him—he made an attempt to justify himself.

"Gertrude," he said, "you know not on what a fatal necessity I have acted a part which I see in your mind exposes me to misapprehension. In another I should not heed this; but I would have my child think justly of her father. I have deeply weighed this matter; I have pondered over it day and night, and I have acted on the full conviction that any attempt once more to raise the western counties for the king ought to be checked at any price. I have done, what your favourite poet calls, a small wrong to do a great right; I agreed with those deep in wisdom and high in honour; I agreed, I say, with such, to enter into the plots of these dangerous men on purpose to discover and prevent them. I have done so: to save the country from farther loss."

"He must not die!" said Gertrude.

"I have sworn it, Gertrude," said Copplestone: "plead not for him; not only is he a traitor, but a foul-mouthed railer and an enemy to me. Did I but indulge a just revenge, he dies!"

"Say not so, my father," cried Gertrude. "What is revenge but a demon, that steals into our bosom for our own misery? Thou wilt spare his life?"

"I must not, Gertrude; did I do so, I were a ruined man. Sir William Bastard is known as the most fiery spirit of the west; and therefore the more dangerous by his example. Hark thee, wench, to answer all in one word—I am pledged to Cromwell that he shall die."

"To Cromwell!" exclaimed Gertrude; "and who is Cromwell but a man? a bold one, I grant, but subtle as the wily serpent. Heed him not. Talk not of him, whatever be his power to do thee service, if it must be bought with blood. Is not God more powerful than man? Seek, then, His favour. Go, then, make your suit to God: Fear not to trust him, for he is faithful; fear not to hope in him, for his word shall never fail you; but, oh, fear to sin against him, for he will judge you."

"No more," said Copplestone: "I must not hear this pleading; it would suit a church, but it is scarcely suited to a private chamber."

"Truth suits all places," replied Gertrude; and she continued to speak with that energy which despair imparts to a feeling mind, when pleading its last hope. "It is of God I speak, the Most High God, and of your duty to obey his law of mercy. In all places, at all hours, it is fitting to speak of him, for he is ever near you. You need not wander far to seek him, for your own heart may be his temple, would you but

write upon it, Holiness unto the Lord! Sanctify it then with mercy!"

"You plead in vain," said Copplestone; "let me go; the hour draws on; I must descend; Colonel Holborn looks that I should see him ere the execution of the sentence. Let me go."

"I will not," said Gertrude, kneeling and holding him by the cloak; "I will die at your feet, ere I let my father go to dip his hands in blood. Turn to me, look upon me; I am your child, the same who in infancy you thought would live to be the hope of your heart, the prop of your age. You would not then let the very wind wander near me, lest it should be too rude; and would you now break my heart, and send your only child untimely to her mother's tomb?"

"Ha!" exclaimed Copplestone, "is it so? you do not seek to hide it: you avow, then, that you do feel for this criminal the fondness I once suspected. It is enough; had he no other fault than that of having stolen into the affections of a child of mine, he should die. That man! my enemy, my most inveterate enemy, he shall not live to wed thee; he shall never own one acre of my land, let me be living or dead. I did not think thou wouldst have done me the injury to love him."

"I do not, I will not," cried Gertrude; "I would forswear all hope, all thoughts of him for ever, rather than by my—my means he should suffer the least wrong."

"Strong must be thy affections to say so," replied Copplestone. "Let me go, wench. Nay, then, I must use force, and break from thee."

"Yet a word, yet hear me!" said Gertrude; "only hear me!"

"I must not, I dare not," exclaimed Copplestone; "for one waits who expects to hear a signal that shall be the last that ever meets his ear."

As Copplestone spoke he turned his stern and ruthless eye upon Gertrude, whilst she knelt at his feet, and with tears running down her pale cheeks, looked on her father with all the eloquent expression of filial tenderness. But seeing his inflexibility, she only added in a faint low voice, as she wrung his hand in the agony of the moment, "May God in your distress shew you more mercy than you now do to another in his hour of need!"

Scarcely had she spoken, when, as if it had been preconcerted that some external circumstance should combine with his daughter's words to sound an alarm to the conscience of Copplestone, the long-drawn notes of a bugle rung through

tower and hall, and echoed among the ancient woods of Warleigh.

Copplestone stood listening in mute surprise, so sudden had been that alarm. He shuddered as he listened: Gertrude started from the ground. "What noise is that?" said Copplestone. His daughter made no reply. "I will to the hall," he said, and instantly left the room. Gertrude rushed to the window, looked out—a torch was burning below; a stranger held it. She waved her hand to him who bore it: and flew from the chamber with steps that scarcely touched the ground.

CHAPTER XLIX.

——— Whence is that knocking?
How is 't with me, when every noise appals me?
Break up the gates, I'll be your warrantize;
Shall I be flouted thus by dunghill grooms?

SHAKSPERE.

THE loud burst of the bugle, which had so suddenly startled Sir John Copplestone and surprised Gertrude, was almost immediately followed by a confusion and disorder that astonished those who were assembled in the hall. Loud shouts, the clashing of arms, the trampling of horse, the fire of musketry, the alarm of the troopers, and the cries of the sentinels, all proclaimed that some sudden and daring attack was made upon the soldiery now posted so as to surround the house.

Colonel Holborn, who was still in the hall, endeavouring to extort from the captured royalists some confession relative to their Cornish associates, stood for a few moments as if lost in surprise. Bold and hardy by nature, and of a courage that was not to be shaken by the suddenness of any danger, he would gladly have left the hall instantly to join his men without: but the fear that by so doing he should give an opportunity for the escape of his prisoners detained him; so that he remained doubtful, confused, not knowing how to act.

Whilst he thus paused, those without lost no time in executing their purpose: they were strong in numbers, and yet stronger in resolution, well armed, and though not regularly disciplined, nevertheless, from long practice in sudden affrays under the conduct of a bold and spirited leader, were not wanting in those warlike arts which give to hardihood all the advantages of prudence, management, and skill. The roar of voices, the fire of musketry, and the attempts made to force the doors of the house, still continued in deafening clamour, as every now and then might be heard above the tumult, the cries of "Roger Rowle!—on to the hall!—lead on!—follow our Captain, Roger Rowle! Where is Sir William Bastard? Force the door. Roger Rowle!"

"The Philistines are upon us," said Colonel Holborn, turning to Sir John Copplestone, who was now again in the hall. "We are lost!"

"Let us not live in vain, then," said Copplestone: "were it

not well to send our prisoner to death before us? Do you secure the door; I will forward to the chapel: there is a secret way to it, that I wot of: I will dispatch him with my own hand ere he shall be rescued."

Whilst Sir John Copplestone spoke these words, some of the assailants thundered at the hall doors, demanding admittance, and threatening to set fire to them if no force could avail. Colonel Holborn, as well as the guard stationed in the hall, was at this moment engaged in a desperate struggle with the Royalists, who soon finding those without came as deliverers, attempted to overpower the soldiery, so as to enable themselves to give admittance to their friends. To describe the various passions which now agitated those within the hall would be impossible. Desperation gave a more than natural strength to the struggles of the Royalists; they were unarmed men, whilst the Colonel and the guard were, on the contrary, fully armed, and sought to prevent their purpose; they must therefore have completely triumphed, but for the distraction occasioned by a new event, equally unforeseen, which obliged the Colonel to draw off some of his men to guard another entrance, where the rabble crew were thundering, and breaking down the doors to gain admission.

Several of the servants of the house, in utter dismay at this new assault, had rushed into the hall, where, struck with terror as they heard the firing without, they stood pale, trembling, and looking on, uttering exclamations of wonder and affright, as the danger seemed to draw near to them. Many seemed not only to have lost all presence of mind, but even their very wits with terror; yet there was one amongst them, a young page, who retained both sense and spirit, and he soon shewed he could employ them, for on hearing the threat dropped by Copplestone respecting Sir William Bastard, as he spoke apart to Colonel Holborn, he flew to communicate what he had heard to his young mistress; and having done so, glided back, by a circuitous way, and stole into the hall without being observed.

"Hold out to the last," exclaimed Colonel Holborn.

"Keep fast the doors," cried Copplestone; "as you value your life, keep them fast!"

"Throw abroad the doors, and that without delay," exclaimed a voice from the gallery that overlooked the whole range of the hall.

"Who speaks?" said Copplestone. "Who dares command in my house?"

"I command here in the name of King Charles!" said Gertrude, as she came forward and stood in front of the gallery, with a demeanour and countenance to which the greatness of

her resolution, in these trying moments, had given an air of courage and of dignity that was almost sublime. She stood looking upon the scene below, and encouraging, with eye, voice, and action, the almost fainting Royalists, to struggle but a moment more for life, and it would be theirs in safety. She pointed to the door of Warleigh with her hand, exclaiming in a voice, and with the manner of one whose word is a command, "Open, instantly open, and admit those who come hither in the king's name."

The young page, who, most probably, was prepared for such a command, and had taken his station near the door, in a moment dropped the large iron bar by which it was secured, turned the ponderous key as if it had been a plaything, and before any one could rush upon him, so as to prevent his purpose, threw abroad the oaken doors, and admitted, like a flood, the wild men of the moors, the Gubbinses; and their rude Captain, Roger Rowle. They now poured in, a confused and agitated mass; whilst the shouts of victory, and the last faint struggles of their enemy, the soldiery, rendered the scene one of universal tumult and disorder.

Roger Rowle was bareheaded, for he had lost his cap in the fray; his raven hair hung in loose curls about his shoulders, and his harsh and dark features were rendered yet more fearful by the wild expression they received from his fierce and determined spirit. He had a weapon in his hand covered with blood, and there was about him the visible marks of the contest through which he had so recently waded to act the part of a deliverer. His first action was to raise his arm, and to command silence in a voice so deep and sonorous that it was heard clear and distinct above the clamour; the same as a clap of thunder makes itself instantly audible above the roaring of the wind and the fury of the storm.

No necromancer by forbidden arts could have produced a more instantaneous effect than did this command given by Roger Rowle. His men, accustomed to obey him under all circumstances of terror or confusion, in a moment became mute at his bidding, and stood with their harsh countenances turned on their leader, eagerly listening to receive his commands, with the ready submission of so many Eastern slaves; so great was the ascendency which the spirit and genius of this man had gained over his followers and friends.

"Let some of you go instantly and search every corner of the house till you find Sir William Bastard. Bring him hither; and, as you value your own lives, protect him, if he still lives, as let us hope he does."

"Sir William Bastard is a prisoner in the chapel, awaiting death," said Sir Piers Edgcumbe.

"Go you to the chapel, then," said Roger Rowle; "and do you (addressing one who acted as his lieutenant) set at liberty these gentlemen. Give them arms, and bind the Roundheads in their stead—it is but turn about. Let Sir John Copplestone be secured: but do him no harm for the sake of his fair daughter, who is a true friend to the king and the king's friends."

All these several orders were obeyed with the utmost alacrity; and Roger Rowle next sent forward some of his men to collect and report to him the numbers of the killed, wounded, and prisoners, amongst the troopers, over whom he had achieved a victory, with as much coolness and ease as if he had been a general long practised in the art of war. He addressed the commander of the vanquished: "And now, Colonel Holborn, what have you to plead, you and your officers, and your men, that the same fate should not be awarded to you which you had prepared for these gentlemen? But for this little token, so timely received (he placed his hand on the cross sent to him by Gertrude, as it now hung about his neck), the noblest cavalier of the west would, must, ere this have fallen by the treachery of a villian. He is rescued, and you are a prisoner! What have you to plead?"

In reply to this question, Colonel Holborn, we need only state, answered with a spirit that shewed, even now he was in the hands of one so daring and so lawless as Roger Rowle, he would not submit to sue to him for favour.

The sudden capture of Warleigh House was neither the first nor the most difficult enterprise of the kind undertaken, with good success, by Captain Rowle and his people during the civil wars. Though fierce in action, he was not cruel after victory; so that he never put a prisoner to death unless he had been guilty of some base act towards the royalists, or towards any one of Roger's own subjects; and the way in which he managed with his prisoners is much too curious to be here passed in silence. He invariably suffered all such as had the means to do so, to buy their liberty at a moderate ransom; and the very stone on which it was told down remains, to this day, and is called Rogue's Rock, on Dartmoor.

His prisoners were allowed to communicate by letters (subject to Roger's inspection) with their friends or relatives; who were commanded at such an hour, on such a night, to send, by one person only, a sum named (according to the ability of the prisoner, or of his friends): this was to be well secured in a leathern purse, and to be deposited on the flat slab of granite, commonly called Rogue's Rock, and situated on a particularly open space on the Moor.

The ransom thus deposited on the stone, the bearer of it

had a certain time allowed him to withdraw out of sight; but if he lingered to watch who might come for it, or to gratify in any way his curiosity, or suspicions, he was sure to receive a bullet as his reward. The sum paid, the prisoner, on the next day, was guided blindfold to the same open space, where a written discharge was put into his hands (to secure him from further molestation should he chance to fall in with any of Roger's stragglers), and his bandage being removed from his eyes, he was left to lose himself upon the wild and desolate Moor, or to find his way home as well as he could.

Such was Roger Rowle's practice in liberating his prisoners of war: when he had several, he never trusted them together in the same place, lest they should overpower their guard, but he dispersed them about in different directions, some in the glen of Lidford, and others near Brentor; for at the date of our tale his gang was so strong in numbers, that it was said to consist of above one hundred and fifty stout fellows, including the tribe of the Gubbinses, who were the first subjects of his rule. The wounded he never removed, as they were likely to become troublesome, but left behind, they could not instantly rise up and follow in pursuit. He had few prisoners on this night to bear away from Warleigh, so many of the troopers having been killed or severely hurt in the fray.

"To-night you must away with us, Colonel Holborn," said Roger Rowle, "and your officers must bear you company: a hundred spur royals* must be your ransom; for I know your wealth, and you know my way on Rogue's Rock. That is a new name given to an old stone, and not a bad one; since rogues are there redeemed with what made them such—money. Here comes Sir William Bastard: unbind his arms, give him a sword; he is a brave gentleman. Welcome, Sir William; nay, no thanks to Roger Rowle, rather pay them to the old Roundhead's daughter, she who stands there in the gallery, and looks like a queen: she it was who gave us notice of your danger, and we have but obeyed her summons in coming hither to rescue you from the clutches of these hawks. Thank yonder noble lady; you owe your life to her."

Sir William Bastard looked up at Gertrude: his eyes spoke a thousand thanks, but not one escaped his lips; so much was he surprised and agitated by what he learnt from Roger Rowle. He could not summon resolution sufficient to thank her, in the ardent terms his heart dictated, before so many witnesses; and cold thanks he would not speak: he bowed, therefore, to her gracefully, but remained silent.

Copplestone, however, spoke; and with many bitter words did he now reproach his daughter for her want of duty and of

* A spur royal was a coin of the time of James the First.

reverence to the existing powers of the state, in having thus interfered to render abortive their plans of removing from the land so many troublesome royalists. On hearing this, Sir Piers Edgcumbe and Trelawny exchanged looks, as they both understood by these few words, inadvertently dropt by Copplestone in a moment of irritation, that the rebel government had destined them to be sent on board the miserable prison-ships, so often freighted with captive royalists, for some far and foreign shore.

Colonel Holborn also, with the fanatical insolence of his temper (and fanaticism generally destroyed all those feelings of delicacy which inspired the respect usually paid to women), now cast on Gertrude many reproaches that were at once rude and unmanly: it seemed as if, having no other weapon with which he could wound her, he did not scruple to use his tongue, in the deep resentment he felt for her having been the means of snatching from him his prey, at the very instant he held it within his grasp.

Sir William Bastard, fired with indignation at hearing these reproaches cast on Gertrude, advanced towards Colonel Holborn with an air of defiance; but recollecting that he was now an unarmed man and a prisoner, he checked the transports of his anger, and contented himself with no other reply than that of advising the Colonel, for his own sake, in the presence of his victim, to cease from railing.

Gertrude (who had never stirred from her station in the gallery, but continued to watch with an attentive eye what was passing in the hall), deeply wounded by these reproaches, for a moment forgot her resolution to bear all in silence, and replied to them with spirit.

"The shame is yours, Colonel Holborn; yours who prepared this night's work of betrayal; and not mine, who, under God, defeated it. Sir William Bastard, and you, gentlemen, are free; but let me counsel you to leave for awhile this miserable country, where your enemies will never cease to spread nets to ensnare you to your ruin. My part in your deliverance is ended; farewell, and may God preserve you still to serve the king."

She bowed and retired from the gallery, a murmur of applause followed her from the hall. The royalists were enthusiastic in expressing their admiration, whilst the wild and half savage followers of Roger Rowle gave rude but honest tokens of their sympathy; so much had her high courage, and the fearless manner in which she spoke her feelings for the king, impressed even their untaught minds with the magnanimity of her character.

CHAPTER L.

You see me here, you gods, a poor old man,
As full of grief as age; wretched in both!

What say you now? What comfort have we now?
By heaven, I'll hate him everlastingly,
That bids me be of comfort any more.

SHAKSPERE.

SCARCELY had the outlawed Captain secured his prisoners, and was about taking his final departure, when the hall door, which had been fastened, was again assailed by a loud knocking. Roger Rowle, who on this night, after his victory, had taken upon himself to preside in Warleigh Hall, ordered his people to reconnoitre, and to demand who desired admission at that hour of the night.

A voice without replied, "that he who knocked was one Captain Coleman, who came on some important and painful business, which he had to communicate to Sir John Copplestone." On this being repeated to Roger Rowle, he desired the fellow should be admitted; determining that, if he came on any doubtful errand, he should find a night's lodging with the rest of the prisoners.

Copplestone, who, from the respect that was paid to his daughter, was treated with no other severity than that of not being suffered to quit the hall, till Roger and his companions should have taken their departure, on hearing the message conveyed by Coleman through the door, came forward, and with some agitation begged that he might be suffered to enter; at the same time giving an assurance that Coleman was one who would do no harm.

The door was accordingly opened, and admitted the noble Captain to a scene that filled him at once with astonishment and dismay. Nothing could be clearly understood by him, except what was too obvious to be mistaken; namely, that Sir John Copplestone, with whom he had been in league as a tool of the rebel government, had certainly this night got the worst of it, and was in the clutches of his enemies. Unnecessary insolence, or any display of courage, where there might be real danger, were things to which Captain Coleman had never been much inclined; yet, willing to put the best face on

matters, and to keep himself clear of any participation in the troubles of his patron, he did just venture to vaunt, in a few words, something about his old services to the king, and his particular consideration of unfortunate royalists, to serve whom he had often carried both sword and pistol.

"Better leave alone that matter," whispered some one in his ear; "do not play the braggart here: remember Tamerton Lane and the Widow Raleigh! you are known to us; you had best tell your business and begone."

Ere Coleman could muster up courage to look round at the person who spoke in his ear, the speaker had slipt away from him, and mingled with the rest of the crowd in the hall. Every circumstance confirmed his first suspicions, and he now no longer doubted but that Sir John Copplestone's house, like the dwellings of many roundhead gentlemen of the day, had been attacked and captured by Roger Rowle and his gang. He lost no time, therefore, in making his communication; as he felt very uneasy till he should be out of such company. He stated that, as he had gone with the constable to arrest a person suspected of witchcraft at Tamerton, he had discovered, lying under the oak tree on the green, the melancholy object he would now shew them.

As he spoke he went towards the door, and, none preventing him, opened it, and admitted three or four persons carrying, wrapped in a large cloak, the dead body of a young man. Surprise seized on all present; none expressed it in stronger terms than did Colonel Holborn and Sir John Copplestone: but who shall describe the scene of grief and dismay which presented itself when, on removing the cloak from the face of the deceased, it was known to be Amias Radcliffe? The nature of his wounds proclaimed that he had been murdered. We pass in silence the first emotions of horror and alarm that possessed all who were present. In the general sympathy and indignation that the sight of the body of the murdered inspired every other feeling was, for the time being, lost or suspended; and some signs, some tokens of pity seemed to touch even the hardest heart.

Sir John Copplestone was in despair; and in those moments of overwhelming distress he did not hesitate to speak openly even his most secret hopes and plans concerning the deceased. "I had looked," said Copplestone, "that he should have married my daughter. I would have given her to him, as the dearest thing I had on earth. Would to God she had been his! But now to see him thus! I will move heaven and earth to search out his murderer, whoever may have done the deed."

"Some cursedly cowardly rascal it must have been," said

Roger Rowle; "for look! the deepest wound. and that which dispatched him, was struck in the back · that felon blow came from an assassin's hand. Some wretch it must have been who lurks behind hedges, and in the dark, to stab honest men and noble cavaliers. I wish I had the fellow who struck that dastard blow, in my keeping, and he should have the next tree and a tight rope from Roger Rowle, without waiting the process of judge and jury."

The royalist gentlemen who were present, and who had so lately been rescued, all hung over the body of the unfortunate Amias, each forgetful of himself in the dreadful spectacle that lay before his eyes—a spectacle that addressed itself so powerfully to the feelings. The servants of Warleigh crowded round the body of him they had ever considered as their young master; his gentleness and kindness, whilst he lived among them, having most truly endeared him to them all. Now, therefore, to see their friend, so young, so amiable, and so beloved, lying murdered, dead before their sight! it was too much; and tears, imprecations on the guilty, all shewed how dearly Radcliffe had been loved in his guardian's family.

Whilst Sir John Copplestone was despatching some one present to announce the dreadful tidings to his daughter, Sir Piers Edgcumbe, Trelawny, and Tremaine, spoke apart together in low whispering tones, as they every now and then turned their eyes towards the body; and then resumed their deep and confidential discourse. Sir Piers at length demanded permission to speak with a gentleman of the neighbourhood, who acted as a magistrate, and who, having heard of the murder, had followed Coleman and his party to Warleigh, as they bore along the body. He had gained admission with them; and without noticing the confusion so apparent from the sudden surprise of the house by Roger Rowle, employed himself solely in learning what he could about the death of Radcliffe; he felt the liveliest interest in his fate; since Amias, from a boy, had been on the most familiar terms of friendship with his own children. It was with this gentleman that Sir Piers now spoke apart.

Whilst he was doing so, an old man rushed forward into the midst of the chamber; and unheeding the presence of any one, never paused till he reached the body. With a passionate burst of sorrow he threw himself upon it, and buried his face in the blood-stained breast of the deceased; kissed the cold lips, gazed upon the still and fixed features, raised one of the stiffened hands in both his own; but, shuddering, let it fall, as its chilling touch awoke feelings allied to horror. For awhile he remained silent and motionless, and then pressing his hands

with violence upon his forehead, burst into an agony of grief, that affected every heart at the sight of so much real distress.

Roger Rowle inquired of a by-stander, who the old man might be who mourned with so much bitterness for the dead. He was answered, "It is Anthony Lapthorne, an old servant to this family; he waited on the father of young Radcliffe, and loved poor Master Amias from a child."

The old man at length spoke, as he again raised one of the cold hands of the deceased, and pressed it fervently to his bosom. "And art thou dead!" he exclaimed; "dead! dear Master Amias; and have I lived to see those young eyes closed for ever in darkness—dead! and thus covered with blood! not a drop left in his veins to warm this hand, which was never held out to mine but in kindness. Oh! that I could warm it into life. If all the blood which runs feebly through my weak body could, by being shed, give but life to yours, your poor old servant would pour it out. drop by drop, to the last, for your sake. Oh! my master, my dear young master, was it to witness misery like this that I was born on your father's ground, fed by his hand, and found no comfort, nor God's word, but the blessing of both came by his means; for he gave me all, and taught me when but a youth to know the path to life. I saw him die too—die a dreadful death! and now his son follows! Ay, there he is," continued the distracted old man, as he looked up and gazed on the portrait of Sir Walter Radcliffe, as it hung, a full-length figure, in the hall; the calm, melancholy, and pity-asking eye seeming, though but in its painted semblance, to look with sorrow on the body of his son, as it lay stretched out in death immediately beneath.

"He is there!" continued Anthony, pointing to the picture, "he looks sad; well may he look sad at such a sight as this! Oh, Sir John Copplestone! does not Sir Walter look in his very picture as if he would call upon you to do justice on the murderer of his son?"

Copplestone started, and involuntarily turned his head towards the portrait. He was about to give some answer to the afflicted old man, when the magistrate before named, who had been engaged in earnest conference with Sir Piers and the other royalists, drew him aside, and begged his attention to something he had to communicate, which would probably help to throw a light on this dark and terrible transaction.

Whilst Copplestone was speaking to the magistrate, Gertrude, pale as death, and with horror imprinted on every line of her expressive countenance, rushed into the hall: "Where is he?" she exclaimed; "where is he laid? Radcliffe, O Amias! my friend, my companion, my brother!—do I see you thus? Good

heavens, who has done this deed? Where was he found? Who is the villain that could do this act of murder, on one so young, so brave, so kind? Do not keep me off—I will see him; I can bear it! he was to me as a brother!"

Sir William Bastard attempted to hold her back, as he feared the shock of looking on the body of Radcliffe, dead and stained with blood, would be more than she could bear. But Gertrude would not be withheld: she rushed up to him; and with all the ardour of female tenderness and pity, deplored, in terms of the most passionate grief, the dreadful fate that had befallen the friend and companion of her youth.

The magistrate was still engaged in conversation with Copplestone; he now replied aloud to some observations that had been made to him by Sir John. "You shall hear me question them yourself, if that will satisfy you," he said; "Sir Piers Edgcumbe assures me that but the night before the last, these gentlemen now present prevented an immediate rencounter that was about to take place between your unfortunate godson and Reginald Elford; who used many violent and even threatening words, declaring that he would require the blood of Radcliffe in requital for some injury, whose foundation was in jealousy about a lady to whom both proffered affection. The affair must be looked into; a warrant shall this night be issued for the apprehension of Reginald Elford. The evidence of Sir Piers and of these gentlemen will be absolutely necessary to forward the process of justice."

"Sir John Copplestone," said Sir Piers, "however much you may have attempted to injure both myself and my friends (and we shall find a proper time to settle that account with you hereafter), yet, in furtherance of justice, in the hope to bring forward the man who has, I fear, dealt foully with young Radcliffe, you may summon us to bear witness to what this gentlemen has but now told you. That is, if we dare, with safety to ourselves, appear in an open court, at a time when we have been so infamously betrayed by our supposed friends into the power of our enemies."

"You have nothing worse to fear than a sequestrator's warrant," replied Copplestone; "for assuredly the part you have taken will not escape fine in the courts—unless—"

"Unless we consent to betray our Cornish friends, or fly the kingdom," said Sir Piers; "I for one will not: no, not while the king lives will I desert the land, the miserable land over which he still in right bears sway; for, though the captive of a prison, he is still my prince. We leave you now; you know our mind, and our purpose. Look to your daughter, and to yonder old man, for both seem overwhelmed with affliction."

Copplestone now gave directions to remove Gertrude from the melancholy scene; for, bad as he was, yet even he (since the corpse of his godson had been brought into the hall) seemed to have forgotten all else but the horror occasioned by an event as dreadful as it was unexpected. Roger Rowle with his wild men of the moors departed with their prisoners, having first conditioned with each for the sum that was to be paid down for his ransom. The royalists had previously left the house. Gertrude, exhausted by the anxious events of the day, and the shock she had so lately sustained in Radcliffe's death, fainted on being removed to her chamber. The servants, alarmed by her condition, for several fainting fits ensued, sent off for Dame Gee, whose assistance was now deemed a matter of necessity, for not only the living but the dead stood in need of her aid.

CHAPTER LI.

Murder most foul, as in the best it is;
But this most foul, strange, and unnatural.
SHAKSPEARE.

DAME GEE'S attendance on Gertrude Copplestone on the night that Radcliffe's body was brought home, gave occasion for the exercise of another branch of her avocations, namely, that of attendance upon the dead. The circumstance of Radcliffe's death, and the disorder and confusion which prevailed from the sudden attack of Roger Rowle, had so terrified and overpowered the household of Sir John Copplestone, that the housekeeper was glad to have the professional aid of Dame Gee at such a moment.

In consequence of the dreadful manner in which Radcliffe met his fate, for there could be no doubt he had been murdered, it was necessary that no part of his clothes should be removed from the body till the coroner had viewed it, and all the evidence which could be collected should be examined into by the "dead jury," for so was an inquest termed, at the date of our tale, by the common people of Devon. It was now past midnight: all the house had retired, to gain such repose as they could, after the terrible events of the evening.

Dame Gee had done all she was required to do (except removing the clothes), to make Radcliffe, as she said, "a pretty corpse;" and, contrary to her usual custom, she did not attempt to rifle the pockets of the deceased. How this happened we cannot say: whether it were that she was withheld by feelings of superstition, for she was not wholly free from such, and dreaded to meddle with a murdered person; or whether she really entertained so much regard for the memory of Radcliffe, that she wished the circumstances of his death to be minutely examined into, in order to detect his murderer, it suffices little to conjecture; but certain it is, that she did not remove the least thing from the clothes of one who had met his death in so dreadful a manner. It is true, she had not hesitated, on a former occasion, to rifle the doublet of Grace-on-high Gabriel, but that was whilst the man was yet alive, and the doublet was not upon his person at the moment she availed herself of its contents.

Having strewed on the body herbs and rosemary in abundance, and not having forgotten the salt, and all things else usual on such ceremonials, she lighted the seven tapers, placed them at the head of the corpse, and set herself down to watch; nothing inclined to sleep, but musing upon the dreadful circumstances which had cut off one of the very few persons for whom she had ever felt anything like pity or good-will—nor did she ever cease to lament the fate of her own darling idiot boy.

As she sat thus musing the door was softly opened. On turning her head, to see who might be the intruder upon her "dead-watch" at such an hour, she perceived the tall and sombre figure of Copplestone, wrapped in his cloak, and coming forward with a stealthy step. He bore a lighted taper, which he put down without speaking. He threw aside his cloak, and shewed that he was armed.

Dame Gee looked up in his face with an inquiring eye, as if she would there read some index of the dark and hidden purpose within. There was a peculiar expression in the countenance she thus looked upon, not usual with Copplestone. The cold, sinister, and cautious glance was exchanged for one bold, resolute, and daring. Yet, notwithstanding this, it seemed as if it had cost him a strong effort to assume resolution sufficient to go through a scene that was repugnant to his feelings; for he drew his breath painfully, and held his lips compressed together, as he advanced towards the body, and began to handle it with some slight trembling and agitation.

Copplestone endeavoured to open the doublet which covered the breast; but not readily accomplishing his purpose, he was obliged to look more closely at the object before him. Dame Gee, who had risen from her seat and advanced also, near the corpse, now observed, that as Copplestone handled it, an expression of horror passed over his dark features, his eyes closed for a moment, and he shuddered.

"What would you with the dead, Sir John Copplestone?" she said; "the body must not be touched till the coroner sees it; and I am here to watch."

"Woman," answered Copplestone, "hold thy peace; what I do is no business of thine. This youth was of my own house; I was his godfather and his guardian; I am here by right to examine."

"You shall not touch him," exclaimed Dame Gee, with the utmost boldness; "not a fold of his blood-stained garments shall you lay hand upon, as there is law or power to make you answer it."

As she spoke, she stood close to the body; and, with a

strength that was truly masculine, endeavoured to prevent Copplesone's executing his purpose. "You would search his clothes," continued this bold watcher of the dead; "what do you look to find?"

There was a cold sarcastic bitterness in the tone and manner in which she pronounced these last words, that both astonished and incensed Copplestone, whilst they awakened a suspicion that chilled his very blood as it darted through his mind. "Ha!" he exclaimed, "is it so? then will I silence thee." He drew forth a dagger that hung by his side, and raised it in a violent and threatening manner.

"Strike, if you dare, strike!" said Dame Gee, as she drew herself back, and looked upon him with an air of courage that had in it something both to awe and to command his wicked passion.

The dagger which Copplestone held upraised fell from his hand; he turned pale as death, and after a strong effort, found breath enough to say, in a low inward voice, "I had no intent to harm thee; I did but threaten thee: here," he continued in a hurried manner, "here is gold; take it, woman, take it, and be satisfied. Gold buys all things on the earth. Take it, and hold thy peace. I would but search these horrid garments, stained as they are with this young blood. Oh, that it were still warm and flowing through those veins in the full tide of life. I would but search them for a paper—a poor paper. Hear me; I have some cause to believe that this miserable and misguided youth, before he left my house, visited my chamber, whilst I was absent but for a short space, and took thence a paper of vital consequence to me and mine. I am certain he took it; for I had, in the hurry of a most important transaction, left open my cabinet; and I am now come hither, if it be possible, to recover that paper. It is no injury to the dead, and to the living it is of the utmost moment. Take this gold, therefore, and let me take what is my own; all I ask of thee is to hold thy peace. Take it, and be silent."

Dame Gee held the purse for an instant in her hand, balanced it as if to feel its weight, looked on the pale and ghastly countenance of the dead, then fixed her eye on the not less ghastly face of the living (for Copplestone, white as marble, stood in fearful agitation, expecting her reply). She paused but a moment, and then cast the purse upon the ground, as she said, "Thus I reject thy offer; and know, that if every piece in that purse were doubled and doubled again, till it became of hundredfold worth in the counting, I would not touch it. You, who have worshipped gold, till the flames of hell have been as a furnace to your coinage; you

who have wronged the father and the fatherless, to fill your bags and glut your avarice, which never has enough, but still, like the daughters of the horse-leech, cries—Give! give!—as that Book tells, whose word is ever in your mouth, but never in your heart—you, I say, who do this, you judge me by your own vile estimate of human motives. Yet know that my soul though dark, and may be, wicked enough, is not so dark nor so cruel as thine. There are things which woman values more than gold. I am a woman, a mother! I have a mother's feelings for my son. Promise me my boy's life, and take your gold and your papers too; I will keep your secret."

Copplestone listened in silence to every word she spoke; he made no reply, but with a despatch that was alone prompted by his despair, he tore open Radcliffe's doublet, drew forth the paper and held it up, as an exclamation of triumph burst from his lips.

"And my boy, shall he live?" cried Dame Gee: "you will fulfil your word?"

"I have given no word upon his life, woman," said Copplestone; "I would give it, I would save him—but it is too late—your son's crime could not be pardoned; he has died the death."

"Thine, then, shall follow," said Dame Gee. "Villain, accursed man! I will demand thy blood, though my own is mingled with it by the same stroke. A mother's curse fall on thy grey head. Thou shalt not bear off the papers."

In saying this, she rushed upon Copplestone with the fury of a tigress that is robbed of her prey—a perilous struggle ensued. She seized on the arm in the hand of which Copplestone held the papers far above her head. She fastened her teeth on his doublet that he might not escape her; she stamped on his feet in the effort to throw him down; and used every violent means within her power to accomplish her purpose. But it was all in vain; for Copplestone was a strong man, and he now put forth his strength; so that, violent and ferocious as she was, he was more powerful than she.

During the struggle a thought crossed her mind that she could even now disappoint his end; and she lost not a moment in attempting it: whilst she continued to grasp with one hand the arm that Copplestone held raised with the papers, she snatched up in her other hand one of the burning tapers, and struck it against the object thus stoutly contested. The papers, old and dry, instantly caught the flame, and as Dame Gee now exerted her utmost strength to prevent Copplestone from extinguishing them, they burnt so fast, that he was com-

pelled to let them fall upon the ground. The current of air, as it rushed through an open window above, carried them to a little distance; and Copplestone now attempted to rush towards the spot where they were fast consuming, in the hope to extinguish the fire with his foot.

But Dame Gee still struggled and hung about him, and never for a moment relaxed her hold till the papers, burnt to a cinder, lay a sparkling heap of ashes on the ground. Exhausted by her own efforts, she at length let him go, sunk on a chair, and said, as she pointed to the spot where she had consummated her revenge, "There is the end of thy own deed, and thy own end shall be no better; thy very name shall become a reproach, whilst thou art mingled with the dust, that the vilest, as well as the greatest, may trample under foot."

She advanced towards the door, paused, returned once again to the body, and again spoke with all the vehemence of deep and impassioned feelings: "I leave thee, Copplestone, I leave thee; at dawn I quit thy house, and for ever; but though thou shalt see me no more, a mother's curse for her lost son—lost when a word of thine would have saved him—shall cling to thee. And this poor youth, too;" she looked on the body of Radcliffe as she spoke, "how he came by his death I know not; but I have my thoughts—his father had a fearful end; and there are those who suspect it was by most foul means."

Copplestone stood for some moments mute with vexation and rage, to think that he had been so foiled by a woman he held in so much contempt as he did Dame Gee. He was about replying in all the bitterness of passion, but some recollections crossed his mind, which induced him to refrain from useless reproaches for what had passed. Dame Gee, in fact, had been admitted too often into his secret councils for him to think it altogether safe to break with her entirely, or to drive her to extremities; indeed, he feared she might do him some serious injury if he needlessly provoked her, though the worst she could say of him amounted to little more than suspicions. In sullen silence, therefore, Copplestone prepared to quit the chamber, and as he did so, he said something to the incensed mother about his own sorrow, that he had not dared interfere to save her son; nor had he really suspected that the lad, who was a known idiot, would have suffered so summary and so speedy a judgment for his offence.

Left to herself, Dame Gee's distress took a more natural turn, and she wept for the loss of her son. The morning found her still sorrowing. As the early light of day broke in the east, its beams stole through the casement, and fell upon

the dead. She looked on the pale corpse of Radcliffe, with more feeling than could have been expected from one of her character, had not her mind been softened by her own immediate cause of distress.

"Oh, this is a sad hour!" murmured Dame Gee, as she stood gazing on the fixed and still features of death as they lay before her view; "it is morning with the world, but night with me; for dark is my hope, and that for ever. The cold light of early day falls on the dead; it falls on my boy, too, but it cannot wake him up to life! and thou, poor youth, thou, Radcliffe, shalt wake up no more, though the birds carol around yonder casement with a cheerful call to the sleeper. But I will not grieve; I will not drop a tear; no word of sorrow shall tell my feelings, whilst I have work to do to be avenged on yonder cold-hearted hypocrite, who might have spared his young blood, and have saved me from the sorrow of a mother who mourns for her darling son. But a mother's curse shall fall upon him, even like the dew of this morning, which, as it drops upon his head, shall be changed to blood."

CHAPTER LII.

I find my zenith doth depend upon
A most auspicious star; whose influence
If now I court not, but omit, my fortunes
Will ever after droop.

SHAKSPERE.

THE proceedings which took place on the following day, occupied many hours: all the evidence that could possibly be collected (as to the time Radcliffe was last seen at Warleigh, by whom found dead, etc.) was most minutely investigated by the coroner and jury. We do not here enter into the detail; and shall only at present state a few of the more remarkable circumstances that seemed to throw some light on this mysterious event.

Amongst the letters found in the pockets of the deceased, was one from Reginald Elford: it bore no date, but was, most probably, written shortly after his first quarrel with the unfortunate Amias, on account of the jealousy he felt for some rival attentions paid to Agnes Piper. In this letter, which was worded in a hurried and distracted manner, Elford conjured Radcliffe to desist from his supposed pursuit of the lady; using many arguments, and even threats, to dissuade him from following her, and concluding with one, that was now read, not without suspicion; since he averred that a neglect of his injunctions, on a point so dear to the writer's feelings, might cost Radcliffe his life. It was also stated in court, that Elford had quarreled a second time with Amias, and was heard to repeat that very threat, only a night or two before the unfortunate young man met his death in so mysterious a manner.

Black Will likewise swore, that on the evening of the murder he had seen Reginald Elford lurking near Warleigh, with his cloak wrapped very close about his face, as if he wished to shun observation. Black Will's oath, truly, was no credible testimony, had it not been, in the present instance, confirmed by that of a highly respectable yeoman of the neighbourhood, who gave his evidence precisely to the same effect.

In consequence of these and many other minor circumstances of suspicion, the jury brought in a verdict, somewhat

rashly perhaps, of "Wilful murder against Reginald Elford, done on the body of Amias Radcliffe."

Elford was eagerly sought for, taken, and imprisoned on this verdict, and under circumstances that greatly aggravated the pre-conceived suspicions of his guilt. Reginald Elford was found lurking in an obscure place of shelter, between Plymouth and Tamerton, on the very morning after the murder. He had no arms with him, but a short poignard that was stained with blood. On his cloak there were also marks of blood; and his whole dress was in great disorder, like one who has been in a fray or a scuffle. His looks and manner were those of a man much agitated in mind; yet he displayed great sagacity and caution in answering any questions that were put to him on his examination; and such answers as he did give, were drawn from him with considerable effort.

He admitted that the letter found on Radcliffe was his handwriting; but denied any intention to take away the young man's life, or to hold out the threat to do so, by any other means than those which he said became a man of honour—in a duel; for, unhappily, at the date of our tale, the barbarous practice of single combat, with sword or pistol, was considered as a necessary accomplishment in the character of a young and spirited gentleman. Elford positively denied being seen by Black Will, or by any one else, nigh to Warleigh, on the evening of the twentieth of June; but refused to give an account of himself on that evening, or to bring forward any evidence that could clear him respecting a point of so much moment. On again being urged to become more communicative, as even his life might depend upon it; so far from complying with these urgent solicitations, he remained stubbornly silent, and would answer nothing. Under all these circumstances of suspicion was he committed to Lidford Castle, there to await the event of his trial for life or death.

In prison, Reginald was repeatedly visited by those who examined him in every possible way; and, under pretext of shewing mercy to his youth, offered to secure for him a free pardon, would he but afford some information respecting the plots of the Cornish royalists. To all these attempts he gave the same brief and decisive negative; and awaited, though with evident impatience, the hour of his trial.

The melancholy and mysterious circumstances attending the murder of young Radcliffe excited the deepest interest throughout the country. His obsequies were performed with every mark of respect for his memory, and sorrow for his miserable fate. The concourse of people attending the ceremonial was immense; it consisted of persons of all ranks and

degrees; for the kindness and affability of Radcliffe's manners had rendered him much beloved in the neighbourhood, where he had lived so many years. The indignation entertained by the public against his murderer was extreme, for it kept pace with the feeling of interest excited by his death. There was not a person, perhaps, attending the funeral, but who, in his own opinion, condemned young Elford, as the guilty individual; and hoped he might not escape the punishment which the offended laws of his country would demand in recompence for the crime.

Before we continue our narrative relative to the prisoner, we must pause a moment to say a few words respecting another personage of our drama, and one from whom we have long been absent—Sir Hugh Piper. It will be remembered that Sir Hugh had set out to assist, by communicating with the royalists, in those arrangements intended to facilitate the escape of the King from Carisbrook Castle to the west of England. Sir Hugh was also to have returned in time to join the meeting of Cavaliers at Warleigh on the evening of the twentieth of June; as Copplestone had no intention that so busy a royalist as the old merchant should escape the net spread for him and for his friends. But Sir Hugh did escape it, and that by a means we shall hereafter have occasion to notice, in due time and place.

At present, suffice it to say, that whatever intimations he received of his danger, they answered the desired end of preventing his incurring it. Copplestone's plot was one common enough in his time—namely, to join with a party of royalists, to assist them in carrying on a scheme to serve the King up to a certain point, to suffer them to hold a meeting, so as to commit themselves beyond the hope of escape, and then to pounce upon them in the very act of treason (as it was called), and so either to imprison, fine, condemn to death, or banish them, as it might best suit the interests or convenience of their infamous betrayers.

Sir Hugh Piper, after the final extinction of his hopes to see the King freed from Carisbrook Castle, felt anxious to return to his own home; for the part he had taken in the plot had detained him for some weeks both in Somersetshire and in a distant part of Devon; and during the whole time he had found no safe opportunity of communicating with his wife and daughter. He was, therefore, doubly anxious to see them. Whilst on his way home accompanied by Cornet Davy, and not many miles from Plymouth, all on a sudden, old Hector (that faithful companion of Sir Hugh's progresses) became so fatigued, that there was no hope he could complete the journey

that night, for he had been ridden, almost incessantly, for many days together. Sir Hugh was compelled to stop, and to put up for the night at the first inn he came to. After having solaced his cares with a pipe, he retired to bed, charging Cornet Davy, ere he did so, to see the horses well fed, and ordering them to be ready saddled by daybreak; as, God willing, nothing should hinder him from setting forward on his journey, as soon as it was light, so anxious did he feel once more to reach his own home at Plymouth.

The Cornet obeyed his directions; and on the morrow the horses were ready as soon as it was day. The pasty and the flagon were standing on the table for the worthy knight's repast, and Davy sat expecting his master to descend from the bedchamber, in order to discuss the breakfast, the bill, and the weather, ere he set forward on his way home. It was, therefore, with extreme surprise that honest Davy observed Sir Hugh's very singular deportment on entering the room; for he stared about him as if he scarcely knew where he was; and though he sat down to the table and handled the knife, not a morsel passed his lips; whilst, in reply to the Cornet's usual salutation and inquiry about his health, etc., he gave scarcely any answer. Davy was surprised, and now ventured to express a hope that "his honour had slept well."

"I hope I have slept, Davy," replied Sir Hugh, with a countenance so grave and solemn that it was quite evident these strange words were seriously spoken.

"Surely," said the Cornet, "your honour does not mean to say that you have any doubt as to whether you have been to sleep or not? every man must know that for a certainty."

"Cornet Davy," answered Sir Hugh, "there are times when a man can know nothing for a certainty. We used to know our friends for a certainty; but now see how falsehearted they turn and betray us! Think what news I learnt but so lately of the noble Burley; and that he and the King are both betrayed—both prisoners; and that, too, at the very hour when we looked for a certainty that our unhappy prince would be delivered from the power of his enemies. I doubt every thing now, Davy; every thing but thyself; for even old Hector broke down last night, when I looked upon it as a sure thing that he would carry me home to supper. I doubt, Davy, whether I have this night been sleeping or waking, nor can I, for the life of me, resolve that doubt."

"Your honour, perhaps, has been troubled with unquiet dreams," said the Cornet; "a sort of half-waking, half-sleeping kind of a rest, that most people call a dog-sleep, not being

one good enough for a Christian. Has your honour been dreaming?"

"Dreaming! Davy," cried Sir Hugh, with strong emphasis on the word, "God only knows what may be called dreaming; it is not for a poor blinded mortal, like me, to say."

The Cornet was exceedingly astonished, especially as these words were pronounced with unusual gravity; and though he made many efforts to induce his master to become more explicit, it was all to no purpose; Sir Hugh partook of a hasty breakfast, paid his score, and asked if the horses were ready.

"They are at the door, your honour," replied the Cornet.

"Well then, Davy," said Sir Hugh, "we will mount and away. Ask the people of the house the nearest road to Lidford."

"To Lidford! your honour," cried Davy in great astonishment; "to Plymouth, you would say."

"I say what I mean, man," answered Sir Hugh, somewhat hastily; "go you and do my bidding."

"To Lidford!" repeated Davy, notwithstanding this command: "surely your honour intended going home to Plymouth, this blessed morning, and that with all speed."

"And this blessed morning I intend no such thing," said Sir Hugh: "once more I command you to inquire me out the nearest road to Lidford."

"I will do so most certainly," replied Davy; "but this is so strange. May I ask, no offence I hope, may I ask what takes your honour to Lidford?"

"I really do not know, Davy," replied Sir Hugh.

The Cornet felt even alarmed by such an answer. "Surely," thought he, "old master must be mazed this morning. The disappointment about Burley's plot to deliver the king from prison has for certain turned his head;" and then he added aloud—"But your honour has some particular cause, perhaps, for going to Lidford?"

"None that I know of, Davy," replied Sir Hugh; "but, may be, we shall find one when we get there. At present I know nothing; but thither I must go and without delay."

"Well, this passes all wonder!" said Davy. "Do, dear master, think again. Lidford is a stronghold for rebels and parliament men, who are no friends to you. Do think again, and go home to Dame Piper and Mistress Agnes; who are, no doubt, on thorns till they see you safe back to them."

"I tell you, Davy, that though Dame Piper and Mistress Agnes are as dear to me as the light to these eyes, I will not go home to them this day; nor will I turn aside one inch from the road that shall take me to Lidford. So no more questions,

no more doubts; but mount your horse, Davy, inquire the road, and follow me."

Cornet Davy did so; but as he mounted and followed in obedience to his master, he felt more than ever convinced in his own mind that his conjecture was true; and that his old master was as mazed* that morning as man could be, unless he were an army preacher.

We leave this honest couple on their road to Lidford, but step thither before them, in company with our reader.

* Mazed is a Devonshire expression for madness.

CHAPTER LIII.

Hear thou, and hope not—if by word or deed,
Yea, by invisible thought, unutter'd wish,
Thou hast been ministrant to this horrid act,
With full collected force of malediction
I do pronounce unto thy soul despair.
MATURIN'*s Bertram.*

THE trial of Reginald Elford before the criminal court of assize was to be held in Lidford Castle, where, at the date of our narrative, it was usual to sit in judgment, on charges for life or death. The morning of the day on which the trial was to take place, was ushered in with the usual stir and bustle such scenes as we have to describe never fail to excite.

No sooner were the doors of the court thrown open, than the tide of human population began to flow in thick and dense: for it was but a small court, and ill calculated to accommodate the numerous spectators who so earnestly desired to satisfy their curiosity by looking upon a fellow creature charged with the dreadful crime of murder.

In modern times there are few places which display a greater variety of scenes and feelings than an assize town during the days of trial. The joy, the hilarity of the numbers collected together (many of whom come thither merely for the pleasure of sharing in the bustle and meeting the company assembled); the awful duty of the court; the timidity, the apprehension of the witnesses; the misery of friends and dearest kindred, who, though innocent themselves, are too often involved in the shame and suffering of the guilty; the imposing presence of the judges; the dreadful sentence of the morning, followed by the gay assembly, the music and dancing of the night, are all things to be found in the town of assize in modern times, where we may occasionally see barristers and attorneys, who have been employed in duties of the most solemn responsibility all the forenoon, at evening appear like new creatures, as jocund and as light-hearted as if neither human misery nor human guilt had so lately passed in fearful array before their sight.

These are the violent transitions which now form such diversified scenes in a country town during the public assizes: but in the times we treat of, it was otherwise; there was

something more of outward gravity and consistency, though, perhaps, less of equitable judgment in the business of the courts. Men did not then condemn their fellow creatures to death in the morning, and dance and sing, as if nothing had happened, at night; but in the administration of justice, a royalist seldom found mercy in a parliamentarian judge, nor acquittal from a fanatical jury.

We do not here say much of Lidford Castle, having already described at large that ancient edifice in a previous work, the scene of which was laid near Tavistock in the county of Devon.* We shall therefore content ourselves with stating, that the court was held within the massive walls of that castle. The Gothic apartment, thus made the hall of justice, was hung with tapestry; and the judge took his seat on a raised platform in a chair of carved oak, which, till very lately, might be seen preserved in Lidford Castle as a curiosity; since it obtained its celebrity by being filled, at a period subsequent to that of our tale, by no less a person than the noted Judge Jeffreys of infamous memory.

Without the doors stalked, in solemn silence, many files of soldiers in the buff coat, steel breast-plate, and cap of the period; they were armed with the matchlock, and had bandeliers across their shoulders. These soldiers were active in keeping the peace, and that by the most summary mode of all settlements in any attempt at disturbance—namely, by knocking down or locking up the refractory on the first motion towards disorder. Many of the neighbouring gentlemen and cavaliers were assembling; some interested about the murdered, and others about the accused of murder. These thronged to the trial: and women, too, were not wanting in curiosity; for some endeavoured to rush into court, even with their children in their arms. Others, less burthened, hustled boldly their neighbours, or elbowed their way through the crowd, as fearlessly as did the men. Old and young, rich and poor, royalists and roundheads, all might there be seen mingling together in the motley group, and all governed by one and the same feeling, that of intense curiosity to witness the proceedings of so remarkable a cause. The civil officers of every degree were also present; for every justice's clerk, or constable, for miles round, thought himself bound to repair to the spot, as persons of more than ordinary importance in all legal matters and formalities of the county.

It was easy to distinguish, even in the midst of the crowd, the political character of each individual. The young cavaliers, to a man, appeared with that reckless daring in their

* Fitz of Fitzford; a Legend of Devon.

looks, that careless ease, and that profusion of gold lace in their attire, which (though the latter was often worn and faded, like their fortunes,) still served to shew what their pretensions had once been to be deemed "gay gallants" and "desperate ruffiers," so aptly described as their characteristics by the old dramatist, who did so much justice to their courage in the field and their valour with the bottle. These appeared, armed with light swords and gay sword-knots; they wore their hats cocked on the side of their heads, and looked every man in the face, as if they neither feared to observe others, nor to be observed themselves. Well might it be said, that if a bold brow and a stout heart could have supported a good cause, in defiance of fortune, Charles Stuart had never lost his head, nor his enemies have triumphed upon his ruin.

The fanatics who were assembling stalked forward; their steeple-crowned hats rising like towers of strength upon their stubborn skulls, which had undergone so many hard buffets, unharmed, during the war. These men were at all times noted for pride and scoffing; nor did they on this occasion spare to scoff at any who, differing from themselves in their precepts and opinions, now happened to stand in their way of progress towards the court.

Amongst the crowd surrounding the entrance were several persons who had the "gift," as they termed it, "of preaching." These were not silent; but with wild enthusiastic gestures and language harangued the mob on the dreadful nature of the crime that was on this day to become the subject of trial; setting forth that the frequency of the sin was but one amongst those many judgments that had fallen on a perverse and rebellious generation. The word "rebellious," however, they applied in every sense except the true one; for, instead of finding in it an application to their own violent conduct, or to that of their party (who encouraged the most inflammatory preaching against the king), they rather chose to apply it to the unfortunate royalists, styling them "malignants," and recommending their hearers, as the most likely means for the turning away Divine wrath, that they should break down, both piecemeal and altogether, the abomination of kingly tyranny, and the pride of the English church and of her ministers, and sacrifice them as they would the old iniquity, so that they might become as a spoil and a scoffing in the face of all the people.

Amongst the auditors thus addressed, some few accompanied the preacher with groanings of the spirit, and with eyes upturned at every sentence of his extravagant harangue, whilst others only gave him a passing stare, and moved on,

neither arrested by his eloquence nor disturbed by his vociferations. The cavaliers felt differently; and but for the presence of the soldiery, and the necessity of keeping order so near a court of justice, would have pulled him down from his high stand, and have ducked him under the next pump, in requital of his doctrines.

The fanatics were, indeed, at all times, conspicuous even in their very dress. Their falling bands, square-shaped and sad-coloured cloaks, their huge boots and leather doublets, all proclaimed that attention to outward plainness, and contempt of worldly vanities, which formed one striking feature in their pretensions to superior sanctity. But, though there was all this assumption of humility in outward things, if the inward man might be judged by the expression of countenance and carriage, there appeared in almost every one of them far more of pharisaical pride than Christian simplicity. Their ferocious, gloomy, and rancorous spirit of political opposition was apparent, as they passed their adversaries in opinion with an air of haughty contempt or of stern defiance, as if, though now forced to be at peace by the circumstances of time and place, they were ready and willing to give vent to their feelings, in something more hostile than the angry exchange of dark looks and significant gestures. A man, accused of murder, was on this day to be tried in open court; but if hatred, deep and deadly, towards their brother (as the Scriptures they affected to follow to the letter declare), be murderous, how many would, that same day, have stood speechless, had they been arraigned for the like crime before the tribunal of heaven!

All preliminaries in the court were soon arranged; for order was enforced with a strong hand, and with that strictness which allowed no deviation from the customary rules. Some of the public functionaries from Plymouth were expected; and, as they were not yet arrived, a free passage was kept for ingress and egress whensoever they should appear. Amongst several of the persons who crowded in, a few endeavoured to use some disguise (such as muffling in their large cloaks, wearing their broad-brimmed hats in a manner so as to shade their faces), as if they wished to avoid too close a scrutiny: a circumstance that in one or two instances drew upon them the very observation it was intended to prevent. These, no doubt, were men more than ordinarily obnoxious to the ruling powers, whose curiosity was stronger than their prudence.

The Judge, a venerable personage, and, though a puritan, not amongst the worst of his class—for, indeed, he possessed many qualities that rendered him a fit administrator of justice,

—had taken his seat upon the bench. The jury were empanneled, and many amongst them carried in his hand a small Bible: for the laws of the Jews were at this period as often resorted to by the fanatics, in the settlement of a verdict, as might be the crown laws of the land, in cases that came before them. The witnesses were all kept apart in readiness: and the sea of human heads, now uncovered, and upturned, were all fixed in the attitude of watchful expectation; each eye eagerly surveying the hall in all its solemnities; when a murmur ran through the crowd, and the words, "the prisoner," became whispered, and echoed through the court.

At this moment Reginald Elford appeared at the bar; a manly and imposing figure, in whose countenance, pale as it was with anxiety and confinement, there appeared that high courage and resolution, that calm determination to suffer with dignity, which had so long distinguished his house. He looked neither boldly indifferent nor yet timidly bashful upon the court; but, bowing to the judge in acknowledgment of the respect due to his high place, he cast a hurried glance around, and then stood, calm and collected, with an air of attention, ready to answer the charges to be preferred against him.

"Reginald Elford," said the Judge, "hold up your hand, and hear the indictment brought against you."

The prisoner obeyed, as the indictment was read aloud. It set forth, at much length, and with all the necessary forms and repetitions of the law, what is already known to the reader—namely, that Reginald Elford was charged with the wilful murder of Amias Radcliffe, of Warleigh, on the night of the twentieth of June, etc.

Reginald listened with the utmost patience, and when the indictment had been read to a close, the Judge again spoke—

"How sayest thou, prisoner, Guilty or not guilty?"

"Not guilty, my lord," answered Reignald, in a firm and solemn manner.

"How wilt thou be tried?" said the Judge.

"By God and my country," was the usual and impressive answer; but Elford, whose recollections at this moment suggested to him the misery England, his father, and his dearest friends, had suffered in the late times, replied in a tone of deep feeling, "By God and my poor country."

"God send thee a good deliverance!" said the Judge, as the counsel for the state rose to open the case. He was a little man, of a quick, lively, and penetrating cast of countenance. Though avowedly a Roundhead and a Presbyterian, he had good sense and good feeling enough to distinguish between political crime (for so was serving the king considered by his

party) and crime against the civil rights of personal security: that all orders and all parties were equally entitled to claim. The accusation for the crime of murder was, therefore, in his opinion, to be viewed without prejudice, and solely in reference to the evidence brought before the court. Many Roundhead lawyers of the period acted on a principle far less equitable and just. Such, however, was that of Master Serjeant Crackenthorpe, a noted gownsman in his day. He had naturally also the feelings of a gentleman—feelings that are truly virtues, though of a minor order, and without which society would become as a garden choked with brambles and with weeds.

Impressed with these views of justice, the Serjeant rose to do his duty—to set forth the accusation against the prisoner, without suffering any political diversity of opinion to prejudice his statement of the case. He commented with much learning and precision, on the several kinds of killing which, in point of law, each constituted a several and distinct species of offence, and the various modes in which the above crimes differed from murder. Manslaughter, he said, being an act which, though it inflicts death by means unlawful, yet there being no malice aforethought, neither expressed nor implied (malice forming the foundation, and the very essence of murder), the deed becomes mainly chargeable on the infirmity of human nature, and is, therefore, removed in point of crime from under the statute of murder. Those penalities, therefore, which the laws of God and of man have ever imposed on the shedding of human blood, become mitigated and softened in their infliction. He observed that, even in cases of the greatest provocation, passion, heat of blood, and the most just indignation, are held to be no excuse for the crime, should sufficient time have intervened (between the injury done and the injury revenged) to afford opportunity to the aggrieved person to cool, or to reflect upon the nature of the crime he is about to commit; inasmuch as no man, however injured, is held to be his own judge or avenger, God having expressly declared, and the laws of the country being built on that declaration, that it is He and not man to whom vengeance belongeth: no public court, therefore, awards punishment like a private individual: in the one, it is the verdict of a solemn, unimpassioned, and dignified fulfilment of justice; in the other, it is that of intemperate and unadvised wrath, that knows no law, and is incapable of clear judgment, pity, or remorse.

He should adduce witnesses who would attest that a long and deadly hatred had subsisted between the deceased and the

prisoner at the bar; that it had been augmented by the difference of political opinion, the violence of party spirit, and above all, by the inflamed passions of jealousy in the rivalry of love —passions whose bitterness, it was much to be feared, had hurried the unhappy prisoner into the commission of that crime with which he now stood charged.

The Serjeant then proceeded to state that not long before the murder, the deceased and the prisoner were engaged in more than one hostile meeting—that a letter had also been found on the body of Amias Radcliffe, which the accused admitted to be written by himself; the purport of which tallied with all the foregoing circumstances to make against him, as the language in which it was couched was at once violent and threatening, and shewed a dark and vindictive spirit towards the deceased.

It would also appear that, on the evening of the murder, Reginald Elford was seen lurking in a mysterious manner near Tamerton Foliot; and that when taken, on the morning after, he was found seeking concealment and in evident distress and disorder; his cloak and clothes being soiled, torn, and stained with blood; a short sword, the only weapon he had about him, also bearing marks of blood; and a weapon it was, which altogether corresponded with the nature of the instrument by which the deceased must have received his death-wound.

The latter circumstances, with the manner and the place in which the prisoner had passed his time on the night of the twentieth of June, he had hitherto not accounted for in any way that could prove satisfactory; in fact, he had generally preserved an obstinate silence when questioned on these points. The Serjeant added, that he did not mean to infer that the silence of the prisoner should be considered as a proof that he could not give any satisfactory account of himself on that fatal night; possibly he might intend doing so in his defence; possibly he might call witnesses to prove an alibi; so as to establish, by incontrovertible facts, the impossibility of his being on the spot to commit this murder, at the time it was committed. These were proofs that it was to be hoped the prisoner would produce; but all that he (the state counsel) argued was, that if the prisoner failed in producing such proofs, the combination of circumstantial evidence, taken both severally and collectively, must tend to prove him guilty of the crime with which he now stood charged. The learned Serjeant concluded with saying, he should proceed to call his witnesses in support of the indictment.

Having thus given the substance of the speech of Master

Serjeant Crackenthorpe, we think it would be both tedious and unnecessary to follow it up with all the evidence which he brought forward to support various items of the charge; and in some instances, by the mouths of witnesses who evidently gave their testimony with the greatest reluctance; so much did the fortitude, and the firm and manly bearing of the prisoner interest every one present.

The evidence commenced by proving the finding of Radcliffe's body by Coleman, Dolly Summerfield, and the constable. Each of those worthies gave their depositions in a characteristic manner. The Captain lamented his coming up too late to seize upon the murderer, and to prevent the crime with the valour of his own unassisted sword; and thence took occasion to ramble into certain digressions that had nothing whatever to do with the business in question. He was reminded by the Judge to keep to the points of evidence, and not to comment unnecessarily on any irrelevant matter.

Dolly Summerfield, or Captain Doll, whose unblushing effrontery far exceeded that of Captain Coleman, in spite of being frequently called to order, gave her evidence with many Scriptural allusions to the nature, offensiveness, and abomination of the sin of murder; and concluded with calling down the thunders of heaven on all those who did not "up and tell," as she said, "in the face of all the earth, all they knew about the matter, to bring such a rascally malignant, as he who stood at the bar, to the gallows; which, for his sake, she wished might be as high as that of Haman, prepared for him by Mordecai the Jew, who was seen sitting in the gate."

The constable who gave his evidence as to the finding of the body, averred, that it was his belief that the Devil and the Archangel Michael had stoutly contested for it, as they did for the body of Moses; and though he did not give it positively as a part of his evidence, yet he nevertheless intimated it was his belief, that at his own and Captain Doll's coming up on the spot, both being of the number of the elect, the devil had fled bodily, leaving a strong scent of brimstone behind him, as if he had been but just unchained from the bottomless pit; as no doubt, he would be again in a very short time, and for very wonderful purposes, if the godly, under General Cromwell, thus happily continued to hasten on the end of the world.

The constable, who was a Millennianite, was with some difficulty stopped in the midst of his harangue; for he seemed much disposed to turn the witness-box into a pulpit, and to constitute himself a lay preacher for the benefit of the court.

Other witnesses came forward: Sir Piers Edgcumbe was

among them. He was exceedingly attached to young Elford, and now appeared and gave his evidence with much painful feeling: for though his sense of the sacred observance due to truth would not allow him to suppress any one circumstance that told against Elford; yet he, nevertheless, endeavoured to soften down the asperity of those facts which could not be denied, and which were likely to give an unfavourable turn to the evidence. When asked whether he believed, from anything he had seen, that jealousy was the primary cause of Reginald Elford's hatred of Radcliffe, he said, "Alas, yes!" in a tone and manner which shewed how reluctant he was to speak to any point that was likely to establish the fact of "malice aforethought," that would inevitably bring the crime under the statute of murder.

Trelawny and Tremaine gave their evidence as to the circumstances of the quarrel at the masque, etc., in a plain and simple manner, answering only such questions as were put to them, and avoiding all comments as unnecessary. Black Will, with a brow of brass, and in a manner alike devoid of doubt or feeling, swore point blank that it was Reginald Elford, whom he had seen wrapped up in a cloak and skulking near Tamerton on the evening of the twentieth of June. The yeoman who supported this testimony was a man of good character; his evidence, therefore, bore considerable weight against the prisoner.

Of all the witnesses who appeared on this remarkable trial, no one was so deeply distressed, or so much an object of pity, as Agnes Piper. The mention of her name (in the charge against the accused), as the object of his love, of his jealousy, and of the rivalry, that had subsisted between the young men, rendered her a witness of great interest and curiosity with the court, as she advanced, pale, trembling, her eyes suffused with tears, and not daring to look the prisoner in the face lest she should thus publicly betray the nature of her feelings for him. All eyes were now turned upon her, and a murmur of sympathy arose at the sight of her agitation and distress.

Reginald Elford, who had borne all the previous part of his trial with that undaunted resolution, that perfect self-possession, which, in a situation like his, commands respect even towards the guilty, felt his firmness die within him at the sight of Agnes. The conviction that she who was dearer to him than life should now appear against him, should possibly become the instrument of his destruction, was a thought too agitating to be endured with calmness. He looked upon her with a countenance in which all the anguish of his soul was

painted in a strong expression of affectionate remonstrance; as the words, "Is she too against me?" escaped his lips in a low but distinct voice, that was heard throughout the court.

Agnes caught the words, and looked up: her eyes streaming with tears as she wrung her hands and said—"I am not against you; I am summoned hither against myself—against my own will—to speak the truth: may God deliver you!"

"Amen to that wish," said Elford, "for I am innocent."

The oath was now administered; and on making this solemn appeal to the Almighty Judge of heaven and earth, that she would speak "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth," Agnes shuddered; for she felt as if she had put her seal to the death-warrant of Elford, whose entire innocence she had so confidently believed. With extreme difficulty, and not without some confusion— so great was her distress—she deposed to all she knew concerning the cause of jealousy and quarrel between Amias Radcliffe and the prisoner at the bar.

Much of what she said was drawn from her by the acuteness of the counsel, who, practised in tracing out truth through every winding of error, of falsehood, and of doubt, soon compelled her, by the skill he displayed in sudden and unexpected questions, to confess that the quarrel had been commenced and aggravated by Elford, and that Radcliffe was not wholly free from those offences that had been charged upon him by his passionate opponent. Having sifted her evidence to the utmost, and having drawn forth many little circumstances, all of which went against the accused, she was permitted to retire, almost fainting, from the court.

In doing so, she cast an agonised look on Elford, as if to ask his pardon for the reluctant part she had taken in his destruction; but when she saw him with folded arms, his head bent upon his bosom, his eyes fixed on the ground (as if wholly overpowered by the cruel circumstance of her being brought against him), with every appearance that life itself had become indifferent to him, all that feeling of conscious rectitude which had hitherto supported, in a moment deserted her; she looked at him once more imploringly, as if one answering look of pity would have been in some degree a consolation to her wounded feelings. His eyes, however, were still averted, his attitude was still rigid as that of a marble statue, in which there is only the semblance of life. On seeing this, her senses forsook her; she dropped into the arms of one who stood near, and in that condition was carried out of the court.

The next witness examined was Sir John Copplestone: he

took the customary oaths with formal solemnity, never once looked the prisoner in the face, and said not a word but what was drawn from him: his deposition merely went to prove that his godson, Amias Radcliffe, had intimated his intention of absenting himself from Warleigh till such time as he should come of age; since, Sir John allowed, that Radcliffe and himself had not been on such cordial terms for some time past, in consequence of his godson and ward refusing to accede to an offer he had made to him, namely, that he should marry his daughter Gertrude Copplestone—a circumstance that must prove to all the world the high estimation in which the unfortunate deceased was held by him, his guardian. Sir John then proceeded to name the hour he last saw him alive in his own house; and one or two of the servants were now brought forward, who swore that they had seen Master Amias Radcliffe quit Warleigh about eight o'clock in the evening of the twentieth of June; and it had been only just past the hour of nine when he was found murdered beneath the oak, close to Tamerton churchyard.

It is not our intention to enter very minutely into the details of the trial of Reginald Elford. At this distance of time, and with the imperfect accounts that have come down to us, we should be liable to many errors did we attempt to portray those minor formalities that were practised in the courts at the date of our narrative. The principal facts that came to light during the trial, are the only points on which we can speak with anything like certainty.

Thus we pass in silence all the minor evidence that was produced to prove Elford's guilt: nothing was forgotten—and all who were present but too plainly saw there was no chance for his escape, unless he could prove an alibi; so strong was the body of circumstantial evidence now produced against him: a species of evidence by which such cases must in general be judged; for, so secret is the crime, it seldom has any other than the searching eye of God to witness its commission.

CHAPTER LIV.

Shylock.—Most learned judge! A sentence: come prepare.
Portia.—Tarry a little; there is something else.
SHAKSPERE.

THE prosecution for the state being closed, the prisoner was called upon for his defence. Reginald Elford, as if roused by this summons to a sense of his situation, at first looked around him with surprise; for so much had his feelings been wrought upon by the part Agnes had taken in his trial, that, from the moment she stood as a witness against him, till the present time, he had appeared lost to all but a consciousness of his own deep misery, one thought, and one alone, having possessed his mind—the woman he loved would be the instrument of his destruction.

Recalled in some degree to a sense of what was due to his own honour and to the preservation of his life, his self-possession, and even his fortitude, returned to him. By a strong effort over his feelings, he determined not to yield to this weakness, not to lose his life and his good name, by maintaining a silence that all men would interpret as a confession of his guilt. With a noble and elevated mien, and in accents that betrayed neither fear nor remorse, he looked around him; and then fixing his calm eye upon the Judge, he pleaded his own cause with a bold and manly eloquence, dwelling with much force on the danger of trusting implicitly to circumstantial evidence, especially where there was no proof that the accused had, in any other instance, betrayed a disposition that was at all likely to commit the crime with which he was charged.

Elford spoke with modesty (yet with that warmth and zeal common to the young and the brave), when he alluded to his having borne arms in the service of the king, with unblemished honour, during the war; and he now asked if it was likely that he, who had done so, should at once tarnish his good name, by an act as cowardly as it was atrocious. He did not affect to deny the feelings of jealousy which had prepossessed his mind against the deceased. He admitted that he considered him as a rival who acted a dishonourable part, in seeking to seduce from him the plighted affections of

her he loved. To resent this injury, he allowed that he had sought to meet Radcliffe in arms: it might be wrong: he did not deny the sin of such an action; but surely it was an offence so common to the times, and to young men of his age and profession, that it would be most unjust to hold him guilty of murder because he had more than once challenged the deceased to individual combat.

No man there present, he averred, lamented the untimely death of that unfortunate gentleman more than he did; he regretted it the more, because Amias had perished before he (Elford) had found an opportunity of confessing, as every candid mind would do, the wrong he had done him by ill-grounded suspicions. Circumstances, since brought to light, had, indeed, convinced him that, so far from having acted the part of a base rival, Radcliffe had performed one of generous friendship and manly forbearance, under feelings and circumstances of no common provocation. Yet this gentleman, so falsely suspected, so harshly judged, had died whilst he (Elford) entertained towards him sentiments of jealousy and anger that he now blushed to own. He grieved to the soul, as he thought of these things; and would now give that life he was so likely to lose on a false charge, could its sacrifice but obtain for him an opportunity to acknowledge and repair his errors towards the deceased.

So much for his own feelings: for the circumstances tending to prove that he had committed the fatal deed; they were, he allowed, on the first view of them, strangely framed and connected to make him appear as guilty. Yet none of them told so much against him as the evidence of the man commonly called Black Will, and the yeoman, who had both sworn to seeing him on the evening of the twentieth of June, skulking in a mysterious manner, and evidently seeking to conceal his face and person, near the Tamerton oak.

"My lord," continued Elford, "I could prove, that on that night, at the hour the murder must have been committed, I was so many miles distant from the spot, that it was totally impossible the deceased should have met his death by my hand. I say I could prove this, my lord; but a higher duty, an obligation more sacred than that which I owe to my own life, or even to what is dearer to me—my good name—seals my lips in eternal silence. I will not save my own life by forfeiting the life of another. Drop by drop would I shed my blood amidst the tortures of the rack, rather than become a betrayer. I would beseech this court well to consider this part of my declaration. It is publicly known, my lord, that I am a royalist: it is also well known that my father has lost

all his fortune, his peace of mind, many of his kindred and friends, in these most unnatural wars—whilst my poor mother fell——"

Elford paused; for this allusion to his mother's fate, slight as it was, brought the tears into his eyes: endeavouring to recover himself, he proceeded, though not in so firm a voice as before: "I am a royalist, and as such am connected with royalists who dare not always appear abroad without manifest danger to themselves and to their connexions. I would ask you, therefore, but to suppose it might be possible that, on that very night, I was in a place, and amongst persons, whom but to name, would be to betray; though it is possible, had I done so, at the price of life itself, they would have stepped forward, and have vindicated my innocence in the sight of all the world.

"The state of my apparel," continued Elford, "of my sword, the agitation of my mind at the time I was seized, have all been brought forward against me. My lord, I acknowledge that, on the evening of the twentieth of June, I was seeking a friend, who lies concealed, and in peril of his life: in my way to him, I encountered two persons, who watched my steps, as I doubted not, with an intention to trace out his retreat by my means. We quarrelled; blows followed; and one of those men I hurt in the fray—but I think not dangerously. Who they were, I know not, though they declared themselves enemies to me, well knowing me as a royalist, who had before encountered them in a public field. They may have heard of my imprisonment, or they may not; but if they did hear of it, they were not likely persons to come forward, so as to save me from my present danger. One person, and only one person, could do it, and that with perfect safety, I trust, to himself; but, alas! I know not his name, nor where he may be found. The circumstance may appear extraordinary, but it is true; and I will now repeat it in this presence."

A murmur ran through the court; the interruption was but momentary: silence being restored, Elford thus continued, while all present listened in profound attention to his narrative:—

"As I journeyed on the road I was going to Sheep's Tor, many miles distant from Tamerton, and between the hours of eight and nine o'clock, two persons passed me, one of whom spoke a few words, that made me think if he proceeded unprepared for it, that he too would be in danger from the very men from whom I had so lately escaped with extreme difficulty; and I had suspected others of the same party lurked not far from them. I stopped this person, whilst he was still speaking

to his companion, and told him my fears; at the same time directing him towards a road that would enable him to avoid the men I believed to be his enemies as well as mine. He thanked me, and said that the warning was well timed, for I had by it, most likely, saved him from death, since I knew not the importance of the charge on which he was travelling. We parted, and as he bade me good night——"

"The clock struck nine!" said some one in the crowded court, in a clear distinct voice.

"Who dares disturb the court?" said the Judge. "Officers take that man, whoever he be, into custody."

"Not yet," repeated the same voice: "I must first be heard."

"Who dares thus disturb the solemnity of a court of justice?" again said the Judge, in an angry tone.

"I dare," repeated the same voice; and, making his way with a strong effort, through the crowd, Sir Hugh Piper presented before the assembly his bold, manly, and weather-beaten countenance, now glowing with honest zeal and with the exertion of hard riding (for he had ridden many a long mile since he mounted old Hector at the dawn of day, and was but that moment arrived); as he stood wiping his brows, and endeavouring to recover breath enough to speak, so as not to stumble or pause in his narration.

As soon as he could command his voice and feelings, he looked stedfastly on the prisoner at the bar, and said—"Young man, do you know me? My voice you may remember: but scarcely, I think, my person: for when we met at the foot of Sheep's Tor, on the evening of the twentieth of June, it was somewhat dark; the church clock of that quiet little village told the hour."

"It did—it did," said Elford, as the sudden joy occasioned by the appearance of the very witness who could prove the alibi to clear him of the charge of murder, overpowered his whole soul; and bursting into tears, as he raised his hands, he sobbed hysterically, and cried aloud,—"I thank thee, oh my God! thou hast sent me a deliverer; I shall not die this death of shame."

"God has sent thee a deliverer, young man," continued Sir Hugh Piper, "and none but God. Let all listen, whilst I, in this open court, and in the solemn appeal of an oath to the Almighty Judge of heaven and earth to prove that I speak truth, tell my simple tale respecting those wondrous means by which it pleased the Father of Mercy, to call on me to deliver yonder prisoner." The solemnity, the energy with which these words were spoken, the sight of the hysterical joy that had burst from the prisoner, all moved the court to a

it was after this manner: I thought that I was alone amongst the rocks of Sheep's Tor, and that it was evening; I was longing to be at home with my wife and daughter, and made many attempts to get my horse forwards, for I fancied I was riding old Hector; but he would not go—no, not an inch would he stir from the spot: when, all at once, from that very rock where, on the night of the twentieth of June, I had been warned by the young stranger not to go to Warleigh, I saw a figure standing and beckoning to me—the figure, though bright, was scarcely one of substance like a human form; it was shadowy and imperfect, or else I seemed to look upon it through a veil of mist. I was startled, but obeyed; and the horse, which I thought trembled under me in every joint, bore me up within a few yards of the shining figure. It spoke these words in a tone of command, 'Arise, and go to Lidford.' The horse, I thought, plunged as the figure addressed me: I started and awoke, and found myself in bed at the inn, with the first grey light of dawn peeping through the windows.

"Again I turned on my pillow," continued Sir Hugh, "and again I slept; again the vision passed before my sight, and the same words sounded in my dreaming ear. Once more I awoke; the lark was singing cheerily, and the dawn was blushing into day. Still I felt wearied, still I cried, 'yet a little sleep, yet a little slumber, yet a little folding of the hands to sleep.' But my dream came a third time; and a third time the command of some power, more potent than that of earthly kings, bade me—Arise and go to Lidford. I started at once from my bed, convinced that this solemn visitation, this awful mandate was, indeed, from God; and I would obey it. As I arose, the sun was shining bright in the heavens; the birds were singing with a thousand throats, and all was beauty and harmony without. I sank on my knees, and prayed to God to guide me in safety to fulfil his purpose, whatever that might be, though it was yet wrapped in mystery to me. To Lidford I came, without an object, without a plan; and going into an inn to refresh our horses, we heard there was a trial going forward, on a charge of murder; curiosity prompted me to stroll down to the court; as I entered, the prisoner rose and commenced his defence. To what followed, you, my lord, and all the court are witnesses: God has delivered yonder gentleman by making me his instrument; though not till that night did I ever see his face, when in the dusk I could not be said to see it plainly; nor did I know, till I heard his name casually mentioned in this court, that yonder prisoner was Reginald Elford, who, long since at Exeter, when I was not there, won my daughter's heart, and would have had my consent to wed

her, but for the times, and his own father's misfortunes, which seemed to stand in the way of Sir Marmaduke Elford's consent to the marriage. The danger in which yonder young gentleman stood, as a persecuted royalist, prevented his seeking a personal interview with me at Plymouth, at the time I first learnt tidings of his suit to my child. Thus did we remain unknown to each other, saving by her report."

To describe the sensations which this narrative produced in court would be impossible. Reginald Elford was so much overpowered with gratitude and joy, that he could not at first utter his feelings; but, in a few moments, recovering the power of speech, and forgetful of all else (except those outpourings of the heart in grateful adoration of his Maker, who had thus wonderfully rescued him from shame and death), he sank on his knees, and fervently magnified God, for the mercies thus vouchsafed to him a sinful creature, though innocent of the particular crime with which he stood charged.

A burst of honest joy, the effect of universal sympathy, for this great deliverance, broke forth: the Judge was deeply moved, and joined in the common acknowledgment that the hand of the Almighty was, indeed, visible in this vindication of the innocent. He shed tears of joy; as even the lawyers themselves (little accustomed to let their firmness be shaken by any emotions that arise from the circumstances of the case) caught the infection, and joined with the rest in a spontaneous tribute of thanks and praise.

The cavaliers triumphed; and even the roundheads and fanatics forgot that it was a royalist and a Church-of-England man, who was thus snatched from ignominy and death; some went even so far as to compare the circumstance to the dream, by which "the angel of the Lord spake unto Jacob." Others said it was like the dream of Joseph, that preserved him alive and gained for him favour in the house of Pharaoh. And Daniel's dream was not forgotten; nor, in short, any one dream that had ever been recorded in Scripture, and could now be brought forward—whether applicable or not—in reference to dreams, as being the immediate intimation or revelation of the Divine will.

Some also remembered the remarkable dream of the court page, which had warned the celebrated Duke of Buckingham of his danger: but Buckingham was incredulous,—he laughed at a dream; and totally disbelieving the warning thus conveyed to him, in a few days after fell a victim to the knife of the assassin Felton.

CHAPTER LV.

——— I charge you by the law,
Whereof you are a well-deserving pillar,
Proceed to judgment.

SHAKSPERE.

It was some time before the tumult of joy and wonder, that had so completely upset the customary observance of order and silence in the court, could subside, so as to allow the business of the day to go forward.

The Judge was the first person, who, subduing his own feelings, now called on the attention of the court, and prepared to sum up the evidence with the utmost brevity, and to direct an acquittal of the prisoner. Ere he could do so, a second disturbance amongst the crowd for a moment obliged him to desist; and turning his eyes towards the place whence it arose, he was about to command silence, when his attention was arrested by a scene so extraordinary that every circumstance of it excited the deepest interest throughout the assembly.

An elderly man, wrapped in a cloak, and wearing a slouched hat, accompanied by a respectable and middle-aged gentlewoman, and a little girl, whom she led by the hand, was earnestly endeavouring to force his way into court, whilst the officers in attendance attempted to keep him back. They succeeded in detaining the old man; but the woman, more active, and possibly having been less roughly handled, pushed swiftly past, rushed forward, raised the child who was with her in her arms, and exclaimed in a voice, whose high intonations and energy electrified all the court—"You have heard the DREAM, now hear the WITNESS."

The extraordinary manner in which this person had rushed into the assembly, her agitated appearance, her raising the little girl in her arms, and the wild tones in which she uttered so strange an exclamation, altogether induced many present to conclude that she was some mad woman, whose mind, more than usually disturbed by what was going on, had worked upon its own feelings till she fancied herself called upon to take some part in the busy events of the day. An officer in attendance went up to her, and was about to force her to retire; but she shook off his hold in a moment, and raising the little girl's arm, shewed to all the court that the child held the

sheath of a dagger in her hand. She looked at the girl with a strong expression of earnestness and affection, as she said, "Mary, my child, speak the truth—God sees you."

The child, animated and encouraged by these words of her mother, looked round, and all felt surprised and interested by the uncommon beauty and innocence of her appearance. She seemed about eight years old: her complexion was of the liveliest and most delicate hues; her hair hung clustered in ringlets bright as gold, and her eye was clear and blue as the softest tints of a summer sky. Such was the child: she looked steadily round, till her eye caught the object of her search; and then in a voice, and with a manner that betrayed some fear, yet not unmingled with a degree of resolution that could scarcely be expected from one of her tender years, she held out her hand, and pointing with the sheath of the dagger to Sir John Copplestone, as he sat in the court, exclaimed—"There is the man who did the murder!"

The astonishment, the confusion, the alarm, which this sudden accusation produced, baffles all description; for Copplestone, thus unexpectedly charged with the crime of murder, appeared to be at once overwhelmed by the horror of his feelings. He seemed as if stunned by a sudden blow, that had deprived him almost of sense as well as motion; for whilst in the act of rising from his seat, and attempting to pass forward, his head became dizzy, and he would have fallen to the ground but for the support of those around him.

As he thus stood drawing his breath with pain, his eye fixed itself on the sheath of the dagger which the child held in her hand. It was a thing too well known to be mistaken, being the sheath of that very weapon which had descended to him from ancient times, and had belonged to one of his ancestors; a knight commonly known by the name of the "white-spur Copplestone;" this knight having been allowed (as a mark of honour for some distinguished act of gallantry in the lists) at all times to wear silver spurs—the silver or white spur was beautifully represented in chased work on the sheath now in the hand of the little girl; and many persons in court, who had long known Sir John Copplestone, must have often seen him wear it, as the dagger it had contained was, till very lately, his favourite and usual weapon.

As his mind rested on this silent witness—for so it might be called—the paleness of death stole over his dark features; his lips looked as livid as those of a corpse; a slight convulsion shook his hardy frame; and his eye (which seemed as if chained by fascination, and to have no power to withdraw itself from the fatal sheath) at last closed for an instant, as if weary

with gazing, and glad to shut out the sight of so terrible an object. Again he opened his eyes, and looking up towards heaven, till nothing but the whites remained visible, seemed in utter despair at his condition. Large drops of sweat fell from his cheeks, and stood in bubbles on his brow; so extreme was his mental agony, so entire the prostration of his courage, at a blow thus sudden and thus public: all his spirit appeared at once to die within him, and he stood conscience-struck, silent, self-convicted, a condemned murderer on the attestation of a child.

There was not one person present (though yet knowing nothing of the circumstances) who did other than consider him as guilty. He was ordered into custody, without the doubt or pause of a moment. This was easily accomplished; for as if the fiend who had so long served Copplestone, had now at once deserted and abandoned him to his fate, the miserable man appeared not only to have lost all physical power, but all presence of mind, energy, or hope,—all was gone; so that the little girl who stood as his accuser before the court, might, with her feeble hand, have made him captive, had he meditated or attempted an escape.

Copplestone secured, the extraordinary circumstances of the case were such as to demand instant attention; and the Judge, who was as anxious to detect the guilty as he had been to free the innocent, determined, though somewhat out of rule, himself to examine the intelligent but infantine witness, who was thus made an instrument in the hand of heaven to bring guilt to light and justice.

With much tenderness, yet with a solemnity of manner that was calculated deeply to impress the young mind (on whose truth life or death was depending) with a sense of awe as to the duty she was about to perform, the Judge commenced by asking her many questions, in order to ascertain how far she was sensible of the solemn obligation of an oath. His lordship had previously learned that the little girl's name was Mary Raleigh, and that she was the only surviving child of the unfortunate Doctor Raleigh, late chaplain to the king.

"Know you, child," said the Judge, "the nature of an oath, and the punishment that is due to false swearing? Do you love and fear God?"

"I know," answered the little girl, "that God made me, and all the world; and that if I am good, and love my mother, he will make me happy now, and very happy when I die; but that if I tell stories, I shall be punished as the wicked are."

"And how are they punished, think you, my little maiden?" continued her interrogator.

"By being given up to the devil and his spirits," answered the child, "and becoming miserable for ever with him."

"And who taught you these things, my dear?" continued the Judge.

"My father, sir," she replied, "when he was alive; but he is dead now, and I learn them all from my mother."

"You remember your father, then?"

"Oh yes, I remember I used to sit on his knees, as he would talk to me and kiss me; and sometimes I used to play with his white hairs."

"Have you been taught to pray to God?" said the Judge, who was anxious by these questions to form an opinion, by her answers, if she might be considered a competent witness on so serious a charge.

"I have been taught to pray to God to bless me, sir, and to make me a good child, and to say the Lord's Prayer and the Creed, and to pray for the king and my spiritual teachers, pastors, and masters."

"There has been no want of teaching, in sooth," said the Judge; "and now tell me what you consider to be the nature of an oath—an oath to God, my little maiden?"

"I call upon Him," answered the child, with surprising quickness, and with an expression of reverence that shewed she had early been impressed with the fear of her Creator, "I call upon Him to hear me tell the truth."

"It is enough," said the Judge; "you have understanding and knowledge sufficient to render your testimony valid. Let the oath be administered to yonder child."

The oath was administered; and with a simplicity of manner the most engaging, and an intelligence far beyond her years, Mary told her tale. "Wicked people," she said, "wanted to take up her poor mother for a witch; and so her mother and herself were to go away to a friend, that they might not be sent to prison. Before they left the house, she (Mary) was to look out and see if anybody might be about to hinder their going away. She did as she was bid, and looked around her, keeping under the hedge that she might not be observed. As she did so, she saw some one run towards the Tamerton oak; and though it was dusk, she knew very well who it was, and that the person who came running along was Master Amias Radcliffe."

The child was here closely questioned as to her knowledge of Radcliffe.

She replied, "she knew him quite well, because he had once given her a piece of silver money with a hole in it, and she had worn it round her neck ever since; and she had often

seen him ride by since then; when he would sometimes stop his horse and get off and play with her, or bring her toys in his pockets. She was close under the hedge; and as her mother had charged her not to speak to anybody, and not to be seen if she could help it, she had stood quite still; for she soon saw another person come running up after Master Amias Radcliffe, and he seized him by the cloak; and she knew that other person to be Sir John Copplestone, as she had seen him ride by her mother's door almost every day."

She was now interrogated as to what she heard pass; and declared that she heard Sir John say, "Give me up the papers you have stolen from my cabinet—my red velvet cabinet:" she was sure he said those very words, and she thought Master Amias seemed to say he would not; for he resisted, and so Sir John Copplestone began to handle him roughly, and Amias struggled to get away, and bitter names did they call each other. They both fell down in the quarrel, and then Copplestone rose up and put his foot on Radcliffe as he lay on the ground; and then Sir John, as if he were mazed, tore out his dagger, and struck it into Radcliffe once or twice, who groaned, as he lay under the oak tree. This was all she knew, except that in Sir John's passion to drag out the dagger the sheath flew towards her, and struck her as she stood under the shadow of the hedge that was not far off. She was dreadfully frightened, but caught hold of the sheath, and ran away with it as fast as she could to her mother. She did not know if Sir John Copplestone saw her or not, as she ran close under the hedge upon the turf by the side of the bank."

This evidence being closed, Mistress Raleigh was next sworn. Her deposition merely went to prove the fact of the child's running home in a dreadful state of alarm; so much so, that she had fallen into a swoon, and on recovering was so exceedingly agitated, that it was some time before she could repeat all the circumstances to which she had been a witness. Mistress Raleigh, alarmed not only for her own life, but for that of her child (who she feared would be in danger, should it but be suspected by Copplestone that Mary had witnessed the fatal deed), hastened from her own house, and sought shelter from the threatened danger amidst the deep glens of Lidford, where she had indeed found a friend. She did not know of the danger of Reginald Elford till on that very day, when one of her companions in distress informed her of it, and an elderly person, then in court, had borne her company from Lidford. She now came forward at her own peril, in order that her dearest child might prove the guilt of Sir John Copplestone, and save the innocent, thus falsely accused of murder.

All eyes were now turned on the real murderer; and the little girl, whose evidence had brought the deed to light, was compared to the child Samuel, who was called upon by the Lord himself to do his will. And, however inapplicable might be the comparison, the scriptural illustration was not forgotten of the little maid being chosen to do a great work, when she advised Naaman to seek the Prophet who bade him arise and wash in the river Jordan. This was the more particularly insisted upon by the godly, as a proof how often even children became chosen instruments to fulfil the commands of the Almighty.

So wholly were the faculties of Copplestone subdued, and even his feelings deadened for the time, by the stunning effects of the shock he had so unexpectedly received, that he was soon after led out of court, to close imprisonment, in Lidford Castle, without seeming conscious of his fate. Copplestone was, in fact, in a state of suffering which appeared likely to deprive him of reason, and even of life.

As the officers of the law attempted to raise him, for he had sunk down on a seat, in order to lead him out, he pointed to his throat, and they immediately gave him relief by unbuttoning his collar and loosening his falling bands, for he seemed in danger of suffocation. This done, he recovered breath, looked slowly round, but with a vacancy that indicated a total insensibility to all outward things; till at length, his eye resting upon the fatal sheath, a groan of agony burst from his bosom, and he rushed forward with the gesture of a madman, as he was hurried from the court, closely followed by those officers of justice whose place it was to see him held in strict custody.

Reginald Elford was liberated by order of the Judge. No sooner had he quitted the bar, where he had stood a prisoner, than the old man who had borne Mistress Raleigh company, came forward, and throwing his arms round the neck of Reginald, cried out, in a tone of voice that went to every heart, "My son! my son! and was it to save me, who am so old and worthless, that you would have died this day?"

It was Sir Marmaduke Elford who spoke; and now turning to the assembly, he thus continued: "This dutiful son, on the evening of the twentieth of June, sought me sorrowing. He came to me in a wilderness, amidst rude and savage rocks, where I had fled to save life—for, if taken by my enemies, I knew what would be my fate. He might this day have called on me to prove his innocence, but he deemed such an act would betray me; and thus would he rather have died, as a common felon, than have periled my grey hairs. But God

would not suffer the innocent to perish. The Widow Raleigh warned me of his trial; and hither did we come in the hope to save him, though by doing so both our lives stand endangered."

"I trust not," said the humane Judge; "no one here present can have witnessed the wonderful transactions of this day unmoved. Sir Marmaduke Elford, though I differ from you in public opinions, yet I know you to be a brave and most unfortunate man; I will endeavour to serve you, and to obtain for you that mercy which has been shewn to many of the misguided royalists: the widow, too, and her little girl, shall not be forgotten. They shall be taken care of; they are both material witnesses against Sir John Copplestone, who now stands committed on a charge of murder."

The Judge, as he concluded this address, beckoned to an officer, to whom he spoke in a low voice, as he gave him several orders.

Reginald Elford, ere he left the court, bowed respectfully to the bench, and expressed his sense of the fair and impartial manner in which the proceedings had been conducted throughout the day; and he thanked the Judge for the kindness he had promised to shew to his father, with a warmth that proved the grateful and dutiful feelings of his heart: "His father's life," he said, "was far more dear to him than his own."

"My life!" exclaimed Sir Marmaduke Elford, whose melancholy spirit was seldom long at rest—"my life! what is it but a feeble flame that is daily wasting to its close; and why should you wish its continuance? I have lived to see my dearest hope laid in the tomb: I have lived to see my king, whose days I had hoped would have passed as peacefully as did those of Asa, when war was not in the land; yet have I lived to see him—mild, generous, and good, as he has ever been—driven with scorn, worse than scorpions' stings, from the throne. The stings of ingratitude have chased him from his high place, and he is now a prisoner! and the wicked hold him in derision; and those whose fathers he would have disdained to set with the dogs of his flock, have thrust themselves in and become as shepherds to the fold. Oh! these are fearful visitations; evil days are come about me with the sorrow of my grey hairs. Why should I desire life, when my hopes are but as a morning cloud, and as the early dew which passeth away?"

Whilst poor old Sir Marmaduke thus deplored the loss of his honours, and of his happiness, in a voice of deep feeling, and in a strain of expression that he had caught from his con-

stant study of the Scriptures, many of the bystanders could not help comparing him to Job, the tried and faithful servant of God, whose miseries were only exceeded by his patience. All men pitied him; and, as heart-broken, and bending with age and the effects of his late concealment amongst the damp and wild rocks, he leaned on his son's arm and tottered out of court, many of the bystanders called down blessings on his head, and wished that those white hairs might, even yet, go down to the grave in honour and in peace.

The old man, deeply affected by these proofs of generous sympathy for his misfortunes, wiped away a tear from his eye that had started unbidden, and speaking to those who stood near him, said—"Thank you, friends; thank you! there is comfort in the prayers and pity of good men like yourselves. Yet in lamenting what I have lost, let me not be unthankful for what remains—this dear son, who even but now would have died to save me: God will bless him."

These words were spoken with emphasis, as Sir Marmaduke wrung his son by the hand, and fixed his eye, now for a moment bright, with wistful affection on his face. Those who stood near caught the strong feeling of sympathy, and the father's blessing, thus emphatically bestowed, was echoed from a hundred tongues, as the reward of filial piety so well deserved; and "May God bless your son!" sounded in the ears of the old Sir Marmaduke, like the voice of melody; so soothing, so welcome to him, were those blessings, that he retired from the court in a far less melancholy mood than he had known for some time, during his late and severe distresses both of body and mind.

CHAPTER LVI.

Let no man trust the first false step
Of guilt; it hangs upon a precipice,
Whose steep descent in last perdition ends.
YOUNG.

By order of the court, the red velvet cabinet of Sir John Copplestone was searched; all his private papers seized, and examined with the utmost circumspection. As it is not our intention here to enter minutely into the details of that examination (the result of which was, by one discovery affording a clue to another, a complete exposure of the iniquities of Copplestone's life), we shall content ourselves with merely stating the outline of facts, thus unfolded and brought to light in a manner that left no doubt as to their infamy.

By letters, documents, and deeds, discovered in the cabinet, it appeared that the late Sir Walter Radcliffe, father of Amias, during the time of his losses in the West Indies, had been induced to mortgage his house and lands of Warleigh to Sir John Copplestone. Sir Walter, however, never felt easy till he could redeem his family estate; and coming into some property on the death of a distant relative, he had been desirous to acquit himself of his obligation to Copplestone. This Sir John constantly evaded; possibly under the pretext of not wishing to press the settlement upon Sir Walter, at a time when he had just received a little property to enable him once more to raise himself in the world.

This part of the business, however, could not be clearly understood by those who examined Copplestone's papers; for many no doubt had been purposely destroyed; and, therefore, many were wanting to render some parts of the transaction at all intelligible. It appeared, however, by certain documents most carefully preserved, that unless the estate of Warleigh was redeemed by Christmas-day in the year 1629, it became forfeited to Copplestone. One drawer of the red velvet cabinet was found empty; it had most likely contained the very mortgage deed of the estate, that Dame Gee afterwards confessed she had stolen and given to Radcliffe; many of Sir John Copplestone's secrets and unjust proceedings towards his godson having become known to her by means of letters found by her in the doublet of Grace-on-high Gabriel, just before his

death. Gabriel had long acted as a confidential agent to Copplestone.

The magistrates who examined these papers, found also the will of the late Sir Walter Radcliffe: it was a most extraordinary document; being dated only on the very day Sir Walter had died of his wounds, and the handwriting of his name bearing every appearance of constraint or force; possibly some one might have guided the pen placed in the hand of the dying man who wrote it. By this document, Sir John Copplestone was nominated guardian of Amias Radcliffe, the only son of the testator. Sir John was likewise named the sole executor of this last will and testament; and Sir Walter declared in it that he had no power whatever over Warleigh, as it had become forfeited to Copplestone. This assertion, contradicted by the few but suspicious papers now found (tending to prove that Sir Walter had expressed himself willing to redeem the mortgage), threw suspicion on the authenticity of the will altogether; and the forced writing of the signature, with the circumstance of Black Will, Grace-on-high Gabriel, and another person of suspicious character, having been the witnesses to it, all so much increased these doubts, respecting the validity of the transaction, that Black Will, the only surviving witness, was taken into custody without delay.

After his arrest, other circumstances came to light that made so much against him, that he felt seriously alarmed for his own safety; especially as Dame Gee had come forward, from motives of revenge to Copplestone, and had given up every paper she had found in the doublet of Gabriel. One of these was a letter from Copplestone, mentioning Black Will, as a stout fellow, who had never failed him, and who twenty years before had done him the best service that he had ever found from the hand of man.

There was certainly nothing in the above-named passage of the letter to convict Sir John Copplestone's servant; but Black Will heard an exaggerated account of it in his prison, and of the suspicions to which it had given rise in the minds of the magistrates: the wicked, also, be it remembered, are always cowards, and are often the first to convict themselves by their own guilty fears. So was it now with this villain. In order to save himself, he offered to turn evidence against his master, if his own life might be spared.

On the first examination he deposed, that Sir John Copplestone, many years ago, had set him to lead on a party, under a promise of high reward, to rob both Sir Walter Radcliffe, and himself (Copplestone), at a certain spot near the moors, on the Christmas-eve of the year 1629. His purpose for devising

this robbery was in order to deprive Sir Walter of the means to redeem the estate of Warleigh, according to agreement, before the Christmas-day, when, if not redeemed, it would become completely forfeited to Copplestone.

At the time the transaction was to take place respecting the redemption of the property, Sir Walter Radcliffe had not exactly a sum sufficient of his own to complete the payment; but he was to ride to a friend's house with Sir John Copplestone, as that friend had promised to lend Sir Walter enough to make up the whole sum, so as to secure the estate from forfeiture under the mortgage deed. Black Will farther deposed, that he had joined a gang of desperate deer-stalkers, under pretext of leading them on to rob his own master (but, in fact, with the intent to rob Sir Walter), making them promise to share equally what they could get by the robbery; but to do no one any bodily harm; threats only were to be used: for Copplestone had given him no orders to take away Sir Walter Radcliffe's life; the real object of the whole affair being only to rob him of his money, so as to prevent—what Copplestone dreaded—the payment of the mortgage in time to save the lands from their forfeiture.

It had not been expected that Sir Walter Radcliffe would make any resistance, as the assailants were three to one in point of numbers; but Sir Walter did resist, and that desperately. He killed one man, and would have dispatched another, so that the robbers were obliged to shoot him in their own defence; and they were the more hurried on to do this act, because, unfortunately, Sir Walter called out to one of them by his name. The wounded gentleman did not die on the spot; but was brought home to Warleigh, by Copplestone's order, in a dying state; and there no one was allowed to see him, as he lay between life and death, but such persons as Sir John chose to let pass into his chamber. The will was Copplestone's own drawing up; Grace-on-high Gabriel had made the dying man sign it. He (Black Will) believed Sir John was sorry that Sir Walter's crying out had obliged the robbers to fire at him.

Such was the confession of Black Will; but it must be acknowledged that, though we have endeavoured to tell the melancholy tale as clearly as the intricate nature of the circumstances would admit, Will told it with many and repeated contradictions, often denying to-morrow what he had averred to be truth to-day. Sometimes he said that Sir John Copplestone had commanded him to join a gang of fellows in the robbery, who were at that time haunting the neighbourhood, for no other purpose than to get rid of Sir Walter Radcliffe on the first opportunity. At others, Black Will would declare

that Grace-on-high Gabriel was employed with that intent: but, however contradictory Will might be in these statements, he constantly admitted that both Gabriel and himself were present at the commission of the deed; and that he did not know but what Sir Walter Radcliffe would have been spared, if he had not called one of the ruffians by his name.

We shall conclude this chapter with stating that, on the twenty-eighth day of October, in the year 1647, Sir John Copplestone of Warleigh was tried for the murder of his godson and ward, Amias Radcliffe: the trial took place in Lidford Castle; the principal evidence against him being that of the child, who was but eight years old. The sheath of the dagger was also recognised as having been his, and was sworn to by several persons; nor did the prisoner affect to deny it; and allowed it was a family relic much valued by all who had borne the name and honours of Copplestone.

On the trial, in support of the charge of malice aforethought, Black Will deposed that he had heard his master direct Gabriel, before he left England, never to let his godson Amias return alive from the West Indies; as he feared (since Radcliffe had declined to marry Gertrude—a marriage which he judged would have hushed up matters, and have prevented all future inquiry), that, on Radcliffe's coming of age, an hour would arrive when he (Sir John Copplestone) would be called upon for the settlement of all those long accounts which stood in fearful array against him.

After a full and impartial trial, Copplestone was found guilty of the crime of murder on the body of his godson, Amias Radcliffe; the sentence of death passed upon him according to law; and, without a hope of pardon, he was reconducted to the cells of guilt and misery in Lidford Castle.

CHAPTER LVII.

Priest, spare thy words: I add not to my sins
That of presumption, in pretending now
To offer up to heaven the forced repentance
Of some short moments, for a life of crimes.
JOANNA BAILLIE.

SIR JOHN COPPLESTONE lay in Lidford Castle under sentence of death in a fearful state of suffering; conscience in him had long slumbered, but it was now awakened by his coming fate with terrific force; so that (as it was with the cruel Nero—who, after the unnatural murder of his mother, was perpetually followed by imaginary fiends) the horrors of his mind pursued him like shadows, which could alone be lost by flying into darkness and the shadow of death! and there "what dreams might come" was, indeed, a thought that shook, even to its inmost recesses, that stubborn heart which had so long braved God in deeds of wickedness.

The retributive justice of heaven is more frequently seen in this world than the inconsiderate are disposed to believe. When, as in the present instance, the blow struck at another recoils upon the murderer, and those who have been the base tools and instruments of guilt become its witnesses and its betrayers, who but in these things must see the hand of God? when, as it were, the very image of the crime is evident in its chastisement. How often to the good has a prison, with all its misery and gloom, been as a temple of peace, a region of light and hope! whilst to the bad it is all darkness; having no light but what is of hell, whose fires already glare upon the conscience.

Such was the dungeon of Lidford Castle to Sir John Copplestone. He was most miserable—so miserable, that even for him might virtue and piety drop a pitying tear, for he dared not hope in God. Extended on straw, his face buried in it as in a pillow, his arms outstretched, his hands clenched, his hair hanging matted and disordered about his dishonoured head; he lay like Cain, the murderer's curse fixed upon him, uttering groans of agony, but no prayer; calling on death to hide him, yet fearing to pass his dread portal, which opens no more, should the path that the affrighted soul must tread be that which leads down to destruction.

But even in this state, charity did not forsake him—Charity, as a pitying angel, sought the cell of guilt and misery, and, she came in the breast of God's own minister of truth; for Hezekiah (who sought out scenes of misery, in the hope to afford relief, as eagerly as worldlings do those of festivity and pleasure) entered the prison-house, and stood before the wretched criminal, ere he was conscious that a fellow being was near him.

For some moments the good man could not speak; on seeing the prostrate state of Copplestone, on hearing the groans that burst from him, he paused, shocked and overpowered by thus witnessing the extreme of human suffering, the consequence of the extremity of human guilt. Folding his hands together, and raising his eyes to heaven, he fervently and mentally prayed to God to give him such a portion of his holy spirit, that he might command words that should rouse from this fatal apathy the miserable creature before him; so that he might seek even yet, though at the eleventh hour, the throne of mercy.

At length he spoke; and Copplestone, starting from his straw, raised his disordered head and looked around him like one who is distracted; his wild and bloodshot eye straining itself with an intense gaze, as if he would read in the countenance of Hezekiah the purport of his visit. "Do you come to bring me a pardon?" he said, for his thoughts had been wandering in that direction.

"I hope so," said Hezekiah mildly. "Pardon and peace; for both are of God, and both are promised to true penitence. Oh! as you love your own soul, do not neglect so great a mercy!"

"There is none for me—none for me," cried Copplestone, in an impatient tone of desperation; "I will not—I cannot repent."

"Hush!" cried Hezekiah, "breathe not such a sound, entertain not such a desperate thought; for it is a suggestion that comes alone from hell. You have a proud spirit; proud, I fear, as that of Pharaoh when he defied the witness of God by his servant Moses; yet was there one thing prouder still than he—the sea, the vast deep, that rose even at the breath of God; and in the mighty swellings of its terrific waves, made that proud king, and all his hosts, as nothing. Be not such as he, or God will overwhelm thee, indeed, with the waters of affliction. Hear me, and despair not: take this book—it is the Bible; I will read comfort from it to thee; I will pray by thee day and night, till I touch thy hard heart, and teach thee to pity thy ownself: I will wait here, lie here,

wash these hard stones with my tears, so that I may but save a soul alive."

Copplestone wept.

"Oh, blessed sight!" said Hezekiah, "precious drops are those, if they but drop as do showers to nourish the earth, to soften thy hard heart to some relenting. Hail them—cherish them—make thine eyes as fountains of bitter waters, and they shall wash away thy crime. I will pray by thee; nay, more, an angel shall bear us company—or one who is like to an angel—even thy virtuous and afflicted daughter; for surely woman, lovely in her innocence, and acceptable in her piety and duty to God and man, resembles those pure spirits of a higher world. Wilt thou see her? Thy daughter waits without."

"My child! my Gertrude!" said Copplestone, "I dare not see her: she will curse me, look on me with scorn, and ask what she has done that a criminal should be her father! No, let me die; leave me to death and misery; but add not to these sufferings, a father's shame to see his child blush for his guilt, and rise up to reprove it."

"She will not," exclaimed Hezekiah; "she will not; she will pray for its forgiveness."

"Will she?" said Copplestone; "will she not reproach me? I cannot, dare not pray for myself; but she may pray for me; there is comfort in the thought; her pure spirit, poured forth in prayer, may bring down some mercy on this ruined head, this broken heart. I will see her—bring her hither."

Hezekiah left the cell, and returned, leading in Gertrude, whose tottering steps could scarcely support her to go through the trial she deemed it her duty to perform—a last interview with her wretched father. She could not speak; tears, deep sobs, choked her utterance, and she fell at his feet, wringing her hands in all the agony of unutterable grief.

Copplestone drew back; he seemed as if fearful to touch her, so dreadful did the presence of his child—of the only thing he had ever loved on earth—appear to him at this moment, when he stood before her as one convicted of guilt.

"Take her away!" he said; "take her away! I have ruined her; made her miserable as myself; covered her innocent brow with shame; made her a mark that all men may avoid her, as they cry out—There is the murderer's daughter!"

"Oh! my father, talk not thus," said Gertrude, making a strong effort to speak with some composure: "welcome be shame, welcome death, so I might but find you reconciled to God! My father, do not shun me; I am your daughter; still your daughter; though you should be covered tenfold

with crimes, I will not desert you in guilt or in death. Hear me: I was once a child; you know how often I did acts that you blamed me for; but on my sorrow and confession of them, you would open your arms to me again, and forgive me. Even so is it with God, the Father of us all. The gate of heaven will open at the call of penitence; seek it, then, and be comforted."

"Yet death will come," said Copplestone; "with me there can be no repenting to live better than before. Oh, death is terrible to all, but how much more to me!"

"You see only the fear, and not the hope," said Hezekiah; "it is not that your penitence alone could save you; but God has made it a condition of your acceptance with the Redeemer of mankind. Aaron's rod was placed in the sanctuary, and there it blossomed and bore fruit; it flourished not from its own virtue, but by God's spirit; even so does he bring forth, from the most worthless, the beautiful blossoms of penitence and hope."

Sir John Copplestone did not seem to hear this last address made to his feelings, so entirely was he wrapped up in the consciousness of the misery of his fate. "It is," he continued —"it is a fearful thing to be cut off by the hand of public justice! to be made a spectacle to every vulgar eye, to every hardened heart, who judge the crime by its chastisement. To stand thus, all men gazing on me, as they shoot out their lips in scorn, point with the finger, and cry—See the criminal! This, this is dishonour; this is the bitterness of death, indeed —the foretaste of hell; for mockery is the sport of fiends. To stand thus—to be gazed on thus. Oh, death! death in the field, by flood or fire, torture, or slow and lingering misery— death in any shape, come it from God or man, if the bolt of heaven strikes him to the ground, or the rack tear out his soul in agony—were merciful to this. I will not die as a criminal!"

"You shall not, my father," said Gertrude; "fly to God, and die with him as a penitent. Do not thus look away from me; let me kneel and pray to you: I will weary heaven with my prayers till you find mercy, so you will but join with me to seek it. I know the terror of your mind. I know we must all feel, we ought to feel, God's chastening hand; else are we stubborn children to his will—when our honour is taken from us, we must blush for it—who but must tremble? Yet who but must then hope, if they have sought God's mercy."

"Hear her," said Hezekiah; "she speaks with the tongue of truth. A pious daughter breathes at her father's feet the

gracious words of the promise; receive them as you would an angel's song; raise her up, clasp her to thy bosom, and have but one heart, one hope, one prayer—and let all be in God. He is all-merciful—mercy is his last, best attribute."

Copplestone was softened by this appeal to his feelings; he clasped Gertrude to his bosom, and wept as he pressed her to his heart, saying, "My child! my child, canst thou forgive me?"

"It is not mine to forgive," replied Gertrude; "God's law has been broken, and he alone can pardon it; seek him for forgiveness, not a creature frail in mortality, and having no strength, even to support this bitter hour, but what is from Him."

"I am glad to see this," said Hezekiah; "cherish these feelings, that soften the heart and lead to penitence. Thy very tears, if they be of godly sorrow, are from heaven."

"Kneel with me," said Copplestone; "I will—I will try to pray."

"Thank God!" said Gertrude, and Hezekiah echoed her words in a voice of fervent piety. The criminal fell on his knees before his daughter; clasped both his hands together; and looked up, as he said, in a manner that would have moved a heart of stone, "Lord, forgive my sin!"

Gertrude sunk on her knees by his side; and Hezekiah, willing to improve these moments of returning hope and of repentance, opened his Bible, and read with deep devotion, and in a tone of feeling, one of those sublime chapters from Job, that magnified the power and mercy of God. This done, long and ardently did he pray by the miserable culprit.

The hour at length arrived for their departure. Hezekiah, fearful to disturb the frame of mind into which he had led Copplestone, so as to fix all his hopes and feelings on a higher state, whispered Gertrude, advising her to say but a few words, and to make her farewell as brief and as silent as possible. She understood the motive, and bowed her head in token that she would obey him. "My father, farewell!" she said; "I must leave you. I—I will come again; I will see you to the last."

"Do so," said Copplestone, "or I shall fall again into despair. Farewell, my child! I would bless you; but I dare not, for my blessing, may be, would turn into a curse: it would not be accepted."

Gertrude was about to reply, but Hezekiah forbade her by a look. He now gave into Copplestone's hand the Bible he had brought with him to the prison, and parted from the condemned criminal with these words—

"Heed not outward things; heed not death; for life is in your hand. Sorrow not for the loss of reputation; for name and fame will not alone save a man: thou mayst be registered in honour, and yet be lost to truth. There is nothing can save thee, unless thou repentest of thy sin before God; for he will not ask after thy name, but his own, to find if that be written in thy heart. Farewell! consider these things; and thy own conscience will tell thee thy state; for conscience is like the Urim and Thummim on the breast of the priest, since it shines bright when it speaks God's commandments. Farewell! may you seek mercy, and find it!"

Thus parted Hezekiah from Sir John Copplestone; and as he and Gertrude left the cell, Colonel Holborn, and one or two of the committee men for the estates of sequestered royalists, entered it, having some business of moment to transact with the prisoner, who had, during his career of wickedness, so zealousy served the parliament and the cause of rebellion in the West.

CHAPTER LVIII.

——— 'Tis done—the cease of majesty
Dies not alone; but, like a gulf, doth draw
What's near it, with it: it is a massy wheel,
Fix'd on the summit of the highest mount,
To whose huge spokes ten thousand lesser things
Are mortised and adjoin'd; which, when it falls,
Each small annexment, petty consequence,
Attends the boist'rous ruin.

SHAKSPERE.

THERE now remains little for us to add, and that little, we fear, will scarcely prove satisfactory to the reader. Sir John Copplestone, who had been condemned to death, and who so richly deserved that fate, did not, however, suffer the penalties of the law. He was saved by the iniquity of the times; for, his influence was so great with some unworthy men in power, that, assisted by the intercession of his friends, he was suffered to purchase a pardon!

Prince, the biographer of Devon, states, that it "cost Copplestone thirteen good manors in Cornwall, to buy out his pardon for the murder of his godson;" that he (the writer) had seen the pardon; which, in his day, was still carefully preserved, as a curiosity, at Warleigh House.*

But though Sir John Copplestone escaped the shame of a public execution, and life was spared to him; the possession of it could scarcely be deemed desirable, unless he employed the space so granted, to make his peace with God. Be this as it may, he did not long survive. His character lost; his villany the abhorrence of every honest or feeling mind; he was shunned by all, except those who had found their political views and their despotism so much served by his means, that they still thought it well to shew him some countenance after the pardon had been purchased; more especially as it was granted to him under the pretext of his having struck his godson in passion, being prompted to do so by irritating circumstances. A pretext so shallow deceived no one; and all men understood that to his political party, and to his money, Sir John Copplestone owed his life.

* The author of this volume has been informed that the pardon here mentioned is now in the possession of the Bamfield family, in the north of Devon; to whom Warleigh belonged before it was purchased by the Radcliffe family, its present possessors.

Warleigh estate was fined, but not confiscated, and still remained in his possession. Soon after the pardon had been obtained, Copplestone retired thither, where he led a strange and moody life; no longer busying himself in politics, nor in intrigues of any kind, and apparently taking no interest in anything about him. He shunned all society, as much as he was himself shunned; and seldom conversed, even with those around him. Gertrude, who, whatever her own feelings might be, still continued near him, endeavoured to keep his mind fixed on religious thoughts and duties; but it was all in vain; the arrow had struck deep that was to be his destruction—his own conscience allowed him no repose; and day and night dwelling upon one train of thinking, his reason became affected. He fell into that fitful, moody, and harrowing state of remorse, which, to a certain extent, produced melancholy madness, and in this state he remained till he died.

The circumstances of his death were never clearly known, as much pains were taken to conceal them. Some said he died suddenly, whilst visiting a particular and lonely spot he had discovered on his grounds, and which he daily made his haunt; and not a few declared that he had met his death by means more than natural—the spirit of the murdered having risen to take vengeance on the murderer.

At this distance of time, it is quite impossible that we should be able to ascertain the real facts, when they were considered questionable even in the age in which they occurred. All that we can say is, that there was in Warleigh Tor a deep and dark cavern, or narrow excavation in the rock, near its summit. In this lonely and miserable place Copplestone was wont occasionally to hide or sequester himself from all human observation. The spot, however, was hardly known till after his death,—and there, some say, was he found dead. All, however, was uncertain: the funeral hurried over without the inquiry of an inquest; and many thought he had in some strange way died by his own hand. Be this as it may, he was buried as privately as possible; and soon after, his daughter, whose deepest sorrow was for his crimes, quitted England, and remained abroad nearly two years.

On her return to her native country she took possession of Warleigh by a double right; being not only the heiress of Copplestone, but the nearest surviving relative of the deceased Amias Radcliffe. After the restoration of Charles the Second to the throne, she gave her hand to the gallant Sir William Bastard, who had so nobly served the royal cause. Gertrude and her husband continued to reside at Warleigh, affording in their own persons an honourable example of that worthy

conduct which, in possessors of large estates, becomes a blessing to all around them: they were such, indeed, to the poor.

They lived long and happily together; but this happiness in the mind of Gertrude was not unmixed with bitter feelings: she could never forget the crimes of her father: a sense of their shame held her much apart from society; for though she never refused mingling with it to do a good or a gracious action, yet she shunned all festive meetings, and all gaieties, as things repugnant to her feelings, and to the deep and enduring memory of her calamities; so that in her case, innocent as she was, the wounded sensibilities of her own mind made it truly appear that the sins of the father had been visited, indeed, upon the child.

Sir Piers Edgcumbe (who was nearly ruined by the fines he had to pay in consequence of the part he took in the unfortunate Captain Burley's plan to rescue Charles the First from prison), after the death of his most beloved and injured king, quitted England, retired to the Continent, and followed the fortunes of the exiled prince. On the restoration of his royal master, he once more returned to his country, and recovered a considerable portion of his estates; amongst the rest, his matchless domain of Mount Edgcumbe in Devon.

The lively Robina became the wife of the gallant Trelawny of Trelawne; and, faithful to her friend Agnes in joy as in sorrow, she expressed a wish that the same hour and altar that saw her become a wife, should also witness the happiness of Agnes. Elford ardently seconded the wish, and received her hand as the reward of his long and faithful affection. The faults of his temper had been much chastened by exile and affliction; so that he had become a more worthy, as well as more gentle being. Soon after, he recovered and took possession of the estate of Sheep's Tor, as Sir Reginald Elford, in right of succession to his father's title and property; for that father had died, broken-hearted, abroad, never having held up his head after the death of his gracious sovereign Charles the First. The cave in which Sir Marmaduke lay concealed amongst the rocks, was by Reginald held as a sacred and melancholy memorial of his father's sufferings in the royal cause; and he is said once a year, on the anniversary of that father's death, to have visited the spot with feelings of reverence and regret.

Sir Hugh Piper and Cornet Davy continued to rub on together much as usual, taking the good and evil of human life with an equal spirit. Sir Hugh never grew rich, and never recovered any part of the property he had so liberally devoted to the service of the late King; but he always fancied he should

do so, and was never in absolute want: for the rest, contentment supplied all; and he and the Cornet, though hope always led them to look for better times, cheered those that were present in smoking their pipes, and in dwelling on the past. Whilst they dwelt on that hopeful future which never rewarded them in this world, they would sometimes cheerfully remark, that though they could not do great things, they could always talk about them; so that, in fact, they were something like the poor man who was invited by the Barmicide to a feast, in the Arabian tales,—they were compelled to banquet on the luxuries of a lively imagination: and this they often did, with more true delight than natures of a colder habit would have found in the full and real enjoyment of the highest honours and rewards. Their life was uniform in affection, and in death they were not divided; for honest Davy survived his beloved master but two days, and both lie buried in Launceston church, in the county of Cornwall, where not many months since, the writer of these pages went on pilgrimage to the tomb of the gallant-hearted Sir Hugh Piper.

The widow Raleigh had a small pension allowed her by Charles the Second, as an acknowledgment of her husband's faithful services to his father, in whose cause he lost his life. Little Mary grew up a beautiful girl, and inherited much of her father's genius and piety, and her mother's sweetness of disposition. She married a young clergyman, who afterwards, during the reign of William and Mary, became a bishop in that church, which, like the phœnix of old, might be said to have risen once more from its ashes; to so low a state had it been reduced by fanaticism and rebellion.

Roger Rowle, and many of his men, tired of a lawless life, joined the army under General Monck; and some time after, Roger died nobly in a long-contested field in Flanders.

Black Will did not escape so easily as the master he had betrayed; for, notwithstanding the hopes held out to him of pardon on his turning evidence for the prosecution, he was tried, found guilty, and executed as an accomplice in the murder of Sir Walter Radcliffe.

Of the fate of Dame Gee we know nothing: most probably it was far from a happy one, as there exists to this day some wild tales concerning her more than natural pretensions to work out good or evil: all these represent her as a character to be feared, but never to be respected.

The tree that witnessed the murder of Radcliffe is still in existence, it stands just without the churchyard of Tamerton Foliot, and to this day it is called The Copplestone Oak. The fearful story of the crime to which it was a silent witness, is

even yet the theme of tradition with the elders of the village. The cave, which Sir John daily made his haunt in so mysterious a manner, likewise bears his name, being known by that of Copplestone's Hole. After dark, it is shunned by the peasantry, as a haunt of wicked and malignant spirits.

And though time has fled on with its usual swiftness, and generations have appeared and passed away in rapid succession, the memory of true heroism still finds a record.—The portrait of Gertrude Copplestone may yet be seen, with that of her husband, Sir William Bastard, in the very hall where, on the night of the twentieth of June, she displayed that noble courage and resolution, by which she saved his life, and most probably the lives of all the royalists who were there assembled and betrayed.

Guilty as her father might have been, the virtues of the daughter, in some degree, soften even the just indignation with which the memory of Copplestone is branded by posterity. And for her sake, we hope that the reader, who has gone with us through these pages in tracing her career, should he ever visit this part of Devon, will look with an eye of feeling and of interest on the Copplestone Oak, the village church of Tamerton, and the venerable woods and mansion of WARLEIGH.

NOTES.

As some of the readers of the foregoing tale may feel desirous to know the circumstances which suggested the story to my mind,—I give the following account of the fearful tragedy, which tradition avers to have taken place under the Copplestone Oak (so called to this day), in the parish of Tamerton Foliot, near Plymouth, from "Prince's Worthies of Devon," under the biographical sketch, headed "Copleston, John, Esquire."

"John Copleston, Esquire, of Warley (or Warleigh), in the days of Queen Elizabeth, had a young man to his godson, that had been abroad for education; who at his return home hearing of the extravagances of his godfather's conversation, expressed in some company his sorrowful resentment of it; which was not done so privately, but the report thereof was soon brought (as there be talebearers and whisperers, which separate many friends enough everywhere) to his godfather's ears. This exceedingly enkindled the indignation of the old gentleman against his godson, and (as 'twas supposed) his natural son also; making him break out, saying, 'Must boys observe and descant on the actions of men and of their betters?' From henceforth, he resolved, and sought all opportunities to be revenged on him; at length they being both at Tamerton, their parish church, on a Lord's-day, the young man, observing by his countenance, what he was partly informed of before, that his godfather was highly displeased at him, prudently withdrew betimes from the church, and resolved to keep himself away, out of his reach, until his indignation should be overpassed. The old gentleman seeing his revenge likely to be disappointed, sent the young man word, that his anger towards him was now over, and he might return to his church again. Accordingly, the young man came, at the usual time; but cautiously eyeing his godfather, he found the expression of the poet, too true:—

Manet alta mente repostum.

That his displeasure was not laid aside, but laid up in a deep revengeful mind: thereupon, as soon as the duties of religion were over, he again hastened out of the church as soon as he could. Upon this his godfather followed him; but not being able to overtake him, he threw his dagger after him (the

wearing whereof was the mode of those times), and struck him through the reins of the back, so that he fell, and died on the spot. Upon this Mr. Coplestone fled, but his friends improved all the intererest they had at court, to procure a pardon, which, at length, at the cost of about thirteen manors of land in the county of Cornwall, they hardly obtained: which very pardon hath been seen by my author; and still remains (unless lately lost) in the custody of the present possessor of Warleigh-house. However this gentleman escaped the just penalty due to so vile a crime, from the laws of man, he did not, it seems, escape the revengeful hand of Providence, which was pleased, either in his son's, or his grandson's days (who is said to have been a hopeful young gentleman) to blot his name quite out of that place, and at his other place to leave nothing remaining but a name; for this estate came to two daughters and heirs; the eldest married to —— Elford, Esquire; and the youngest unto Sir John Bamfield, of Poltimore, Baronet. The eldest sister had Coppleston-house and demesnes, which is all in ruins, and the estate sold; it is now in the possession of Sir Walter Young, of this county, Baronet. The youngest sister, for her partition, had Warley, in whose posterity it still remains; and is the inheritance of her great grandson, Sir Coplestone Warwick Bamfield, Baronet, whom God long preserve and make highly eminent and useful in his county." Prince published the above account in 1701.

The Gubbingses. Of this extrordinary tribe, *Fuller*, in his *Worthies*, says: "I have read of an England beyond Wales; but the Gubbings-land is a Scythia within England; and they pure heathens therein. It lyeth nigh to Brent-Tor, in the edge of Dartmoor. It is reported, that some two hundred years since (the work from which this extract is given was printed in 1662), two strumpets being with child, fled hither to hide themselves, to whom certain lewd fellows resorted, and this was the first original. They are a peculiar of their own making, exempt from bishop, archdeacon, and all authority, either ecclesiastical or civil. They live in cotts (rather holes than houses) like *swine*, having all in common, *multiplied* without *marriage* into many hundreds. Their language is the *dross* or the *dregs* of the vulgar Devonian; and the more learned a man is, the worse he can understand them. During our civil wars, no soldiers were quartered among them for fear of being *quartered* amongst them. Their wealth consisteth *in other men's goods*, and they live by stealing the sheep on the moor; and vain is it for any to search their houses; being a work *beneath* the pains of a *sheriff*, and *above* the the power of a *constable*. Such their *fleetness*, they will out-

run many *horses; vivaciousness*, they outlive *most men*, living in the ignorance of *luxury*, the *extinguisher* of life. They hold together like *burrs*, offend *one* and all will revenge his quarrel. But now, I am informed, that they begin to be civilized, and tender their children to *baptism;* and return to be men, yea, Christians again. I hope no *civil people* amongst us will turn *barbarians*, now these *barbarians* begin to be *civilized.*"

In my general preface, volume the first, of this series, I have given an account of a few traditionary fragments in this part of Devon, on which I raised some scenes and incidents introduced in this work. Such as the tradition respecting Dame Gee and her idiot son. The efforts to save the King, of Captain John Burley, the royalist; and Reginald Elford's being concealed in the cave at Sheep's Tor, etc. To the general preface, I must refer my reader for all these particulars; one incident, however, founded on a circumstance mentioned in *Prince's Worthies of Devon*, though the authority is too long for extract, I may observe had its full warrant in respect to the correctness of the custom, in our Western Biographer. I allude to the scene where the maskers so unexpectedly visit Mount Edgcumbe house; and under the disguise of revellers, avail themselves of the opportunity to carry forward a serious purpose. Such a scene, Prince assures us, actually occurred in the ancient halls of Mount Edgcumbe, and ended by one of the revellers offering himself in marriage to a daughter of the Edgcumbe family, whom he afterwards espoused.

My reasons for having laid the scene of action in the reign of Charles the First, instead of Elizabeth, I have given in the preface just named. The few facts related in these notes would, in some measure, have anticipated the story; I therefore reserved them till its close. I have only to add, that Roger Rowle, the outlaw, is spoken of by Browne, the poet, in his verses on "Lidford Law." The portraits of Gertrude Copplestone and Sir William Bastard, her husband, (and both those personages lived in the time of the civil wars), as stated, are still preserved at Warleigh. I took the liberty to make Gertrude the daughter of the Copplestone of Prince.

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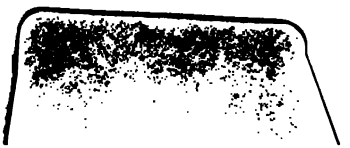

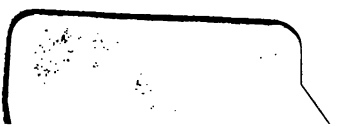

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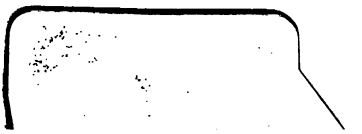

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